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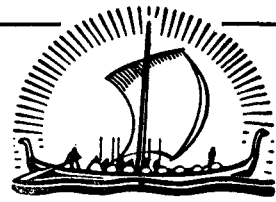

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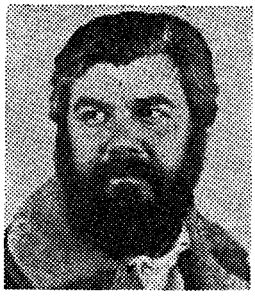

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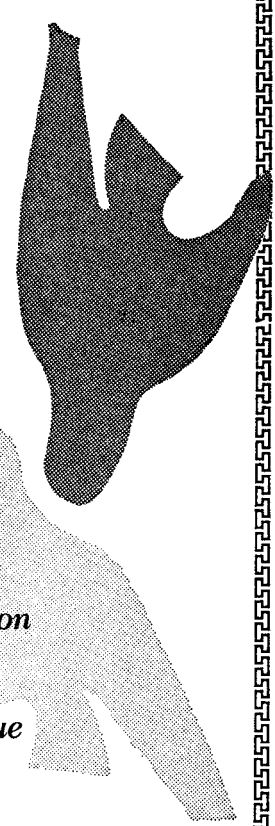

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Irving Howe

RADICAL QUESTIONS AND THE AMERICAN INTELLECTUAL

Suppose we were to ask ourselves, "What have been the decisive trends in American intellectual life these past few decades?" The answer, I think, would have to include some of the following:

The disintegration of Marxism as a frequently accepted mode of social analysis and subsequent efforts to patch together surrogate ideologies or, finding virtue in necessity, to dispense with ideology entirely.

Even those intellectuals who were never under the sway of Marxism have been strongly affected by its crisis and collapse, both as a system of politics and an encompassing Weltanschauung. At least part of what has happened among our intellectuals these past twenty-five years can be regarded as the result of the loss or abandonment of a powerful sustaining belief: one that, in its psychological dynamics, operated as a variety of religious experience. Future historians of ideas are likely to see this experience as similar in consequence—in pain, disorientation and a series of brilliant reactive improvisations—to the experience of those mid-nineteenth-century English writers who broke away from orthodox Christianity yet could not rid themselves of a yearning for transcendence. A whole generation has been marked, often marred, by the deflation of the revolutionary mystique. Some intellectuals have, in fact, been so thoroughly captive to a nostalgia for apocalypse that they have failed to respond to the urgencies of political life today. Others have conducted a frantic search for a substitute "proletariat," ranging from hipsters to the alienated under-

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class, that might provide a new motor for social energy. Still others have settled into political empiricism, content to work within the limits of "the given."

While it seems to me almost impossible for a man of critical intelligence to retain belief in such crucial aspects of political Marxism as the "revolutionary potential" of the working class, the "withering away" of the state and the "dictatorship of the proletariat," we must acknowledge that the Marxist heritage, no doubt shaping our thought in more ways than we know, remains powerful, and that the Marxist method, especially if it becomes absorbed with a minimum of self-consciousness into a larger style of thought, can still be valuable in sharpening the issues of political debate.

A considerable change in the social status, economic condition and prestige ranking of the intellectuals as a group.

The intellectuals can no longer be said to live beyond the margin or within the crevices of society. Those who continue in bohemian poverty must often choose to remain there. The honorific role accorded the intellectuals under the Kennedy administration was merely a symbolic climax to a process long under way—a process bringing to a virtual end that condition of psychic displacement and political estrangement which had first begun in the early or mid-nineteenth century. Today the intellectuals are, as a rule, firmly entrenched within the society: as academicians in a growing university system; as middlemen whose skills are exploited, while their tastes are violated, in the industries of cultural entertainment; as members of a slowly cohering elite within or near the government. The term "Establishment" has been used with a comic recklessness in the last few years, mostly as a "put down" of those unfortunate enough to be over thirty, regularly employed and addicted to suits and shaving; but for the first time we are perhaps beginning to have in the United States the kind of coherent and influential formation of intellectuals which in England is called "the Establishment."

The Cold War has shaped—I would say, mostly misshaped—intellectual life to a very large, though unmeasured, extent.

It requires an effort to remember the atmosphere in this country during the early fifties. A good many intellectuals formerly on the Left were engaged in a flight to conservatism that was as ungainly as it was premature. Seriously entertained, conservatism can

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be a respectable point of view; but the sour hostility toward their own past, the frantic pursuit of intellectual "novelties," the barely disguised contempt for freedom which some ex-radical intellectuals showed in their devotion to the Cold War—all this was a good deal worse than conservatism. Do I exaggerate in saying that for the ex-radical intellectuals there was a steady need to depreciate the menace of Senator McCarthy's hooliganism, and that what really mattered was a kind of *union sacrée* in behalf of "anti-Communism"? Or that under the tranquilizing influence of a new affection for the American system, social problems were regarded as largely solved or, in more exalted moments, as symptoms of that impulse toward evil forever lodged in the human soul?

An increasing tendency toward and an implicit acceptance of intellectual specialization, what might be called the "privatization of work," so that the very idea of the intellectual vocation has come into question.

We are all familiar with the troubled inquiries as to whether the intellectual as a distinct type is likely to survive in an increasingly managerial and technological society. We are also familiar with privately voiced complaints—some may reflect no more than the sourness of people getting older, but some are a recognition of painful truth—that among younger writers these days there is no shortage of talent, energy or ambition, but rarely evidence of that freewheeling and "dilettantish" concern with general ideas which we take to be characteristic of the intellectual life. No one supposes that in any future society intellectual work can possibly cease; what is at stake is whether such work can be broken down into a series of discrete and specialized functions, so that the larger animating concerns with values and ideals may gradually (or at least sooner than the state) wither away. What in some accounts is said to have happened to modern philosophy, seems a possible terminus for the life of the intellectual as an historical type.

Criticism of social institutions has in the last few decades been increasingly appropriated by journalists who combine useful exposé with a lack of fundamental theory and/or values.

Much of the muckraking—the attack upon specific deformations and failures of the welfare state which appeared during the fifties and early sixties—was composed by journalists with little

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grasp of what their material signified and with an inclination to transform their exposures into mere amusements for middlebrow readers. The intellectuals, having virtually ceded this area of work, largely confined themselves to criticizing the superficiality and vulgarity of such journalism, without recognizing that their own abdication was in part responsible for its influence.

Moods and theories of political resignation, and sometimes assertions as to the inherent recalcitrance of social problems, became frequent among the older or more sophisticated intellectuals.

The welfare society throws up certain kinds of social troubles which cannot be as precisely delineated—nor can solutions be as confidently proposed—as we felt it possible to do for the economic problems of a few decades ago. These new social troubles seem so endemic and pervasive, so much a matter of tone, atmosphere and malaise, that an impression grows up that neither revolution nor reform, and not even social engineering, can significantly affect them. And some intellectuals proclaimed during the fifties what was presumably never known before: that solutions to problems engender further problems; there is no end to the chain. All of this reflected a decrease of confidence in the powers of human reason, and a growing doubt as to the uses of human will.

One of the main avenues for intellectual activity and self-assertiveness—our common opposition to the products, the very idea of "mass culture"—has recently been little taken.

Not that intellectuals became noticeably slacker in their critical standards or less contemptuous of popular trash. The problem is rather that, almost unwittingly, they resigned themselves to the supposedly intractable evils of "mass culture," just as some have learned to resign themselves to the supposedly intractable evils of society in general—or (in a response to which I am more sympathetic) they became weary with the Sisyphean task of cultural hygiene. The once numerous and, up to a point, fruitful discussions of "mass culture" have by now almost disappeared from the serious journals. And in truth the problems connected with "mass culture" have become more slippery than they were, or seemed, a few decades ago. It is increasingly difficult, in that no-man's-land where the middlebrow abuts upon the serious, to draw a line between the authentic and a skillful simulation of the authentic. The theoretical analyses of "mass

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culture" begun in the thirties and forties have run into a dead end, and none of them seems fully applicable at the present moment. The militant zeal of the critics of "mass culture" has cooled; a few find themselves quite at home in the atmosphere and institutions they were among the first to attack. And meanwhile, perhaps in consequence, there has arisen a new school of sensibility which denies the relevance of esthetic discrimination, insisting that the Beatles are as "good" or "important" as Stravinsky, and priding itself upon a capacity to submit to every variety of cultural or pseudo-cultural experience.

> *The last few decades have been characterized by a quick, often facile, sometimes exciting shift in cultural fashions; by a quantity of stylistic and temperamental display; and by a drive toward personal distinction as an end in itself, such as must surely always be present in intellectual life but has seemed especially strong since the end of the war.*

At no point in the life of American intellectuals during the twentieth century has the *idea* of an intellectual community been weaker than it is today. Yet at no point has the life of the intellectuals been more clearly or fully structured into a compact, miniature society than it is today.

The picture is bleak, but in the last few years there have been changes, though not yet changes strong enough to reverse the general drift of American intellectual life. People seem more inclined to question and speculate than they were ten years ago; radicalism, as a mood if not a movement, is beginning to revive; at the very least, we are done with the suffocating complacency of the fifties. Poverty was then mentioned nowhere but in the radical press; today it has become a theme for national discussion, if not yet sufficient national action. A decade ago, merely to suggest that there was a problem of power in the United States—a concentration of resources, wealth and "decision-making" which undercuts the formal claims of democracy—would call down scorn for clinging to "Marxist clichés"; today the matter is seriously discussed even among moderate analysts. In the fifties American foreign policy met with little sustained criticism; now a portion of the academic world is pressing its criticisms with great vigor. Why this shift in political and intellectual attitudes? A few reasons can be suggested:

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• The Cold War has largely run its course. That Western Europe has been stabilized on a more or less democratic basis is certainly a major achievement; otherwise, the record of the West in the Cold War is largely one of sterility. The inadequacies of Western power, especially in regard to areas like Latin America, have become clear; and it will not do simply to keep repeating the anti-Communist catchwords of a decade ago.

• It seems likely that we shall not soon be plunged into a nuclear war through the deliberate choice of one or both of the major powers. At least a partial relaxation can therefore begin, as a result of which new problems, not accessible to Cold War politics, can come to the forefront.

• It is increasingly hard to maintain that American society has reached a state of health so complete that little more than marginal problems remain to be solved—and those (as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. suggested a few years ago) having less to do with gross exploitations than with psychological disturbances and esthetic needs.

• While a sharp distinction between democratic and totalitarian values remains a moral imperative, the view of the world as polarized between extremes of good and evil, "we" and "they," becomes increasingly tiresome.

• In the United States the civil rights movement has had a substantial liberating effect, not merely in gaining victories for the Negroes and in providing the idealistic young with opportunities for activity and sacrifice, but also in opening up the country to fresh moods and sentiments.

• The Kennedy administration, more through its civilized tone than actual achievements, helped clear the air of McCarthyite fumes and brought to national consciousness at least the possibility of further social advance.

• The ideological, or what may come to the same thing, the anti-ideological zealousness characterizing a good part of the intellectual world in the early fifties was bound to exhaust itself. Just as after the crude Marxism of the thirties, there has followed a period of sobering second thoughts.

Nevertheless, the truth is that radical criticism remains scattered, limited in impact, uncertain as to intention, ill-developed in program and confined to a very few writers. Suppose, however, there were

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or could be such a criticism. To what order of problems would it address itself?

The Function of Criticism in the Welfare State

The welfare state preserves the essential character of capitalist economy, in that the interplay of private or corporate owners in the free market remains dominant; but it modifies the workings of that economy, in that the powers of free disposal by property owners are regulated and controlled by political organs. A more detailed description of the welfare state as a static "model" is provided by Henry Pachter:

> The welfare state is a capitalistic economy which largely depends on the free market but in which the countervailing powers have been politicized and are consciously employed to balance the economy, to develop the national resources or to pursue fixed goals of social policy. . . . The fully developed welfare state has at its disposal a wide range of economic instruments, classical as well as Keynesian and statist. . . . The welfare state may achieve techniques of industry-wide planning, price-fixing and over-all control of development, but though it will nationalize the coal industry in France and England, erect a TVA in the United States and build a government steel mill for India, it stops short of expropriation. On the contrary, its proclaimed aim is to preserve the structure of property and to protect the formation of a free market. Whatever expropriating is to be done must come through the free play of the market, as is being done, e.g. in our farm economy despite price supports. The basic relationships of buyer and seller, employer and employee, owner and non-owner are no different from those prevailing under pure capitalism, but they are supplemented by state interference in two important areas: where classical capitalism is indifferent to the distribution of income, the welfare state at least tries to make income differentials less steep; also, whereas under pure capitalism the development of resources is but an accidental by-product of the profit incentive, the welfare state sets itself definite goals of developing public and private facilities. . . .
>
> . . . We should not be misled by its efforts to plan, regulate and control production, to redistribute income and to curb the un-

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> inhibited use of private property. At the hub of its mechanics, it is different from socialism. Though some prices and wages are determined politically, on the whole they are still determined by the market, and that is true even of the public enterprises; the regime of property prevails throughout, with the dead weight of past investments burdening the calculation of profit and the decisions on future investments, with at least a theoretical obligation to balance all budgets, and with remuneration still tightly ruled by a man's contribution to the value of the product. Public projects still need to be justified in terms of national policy rather than human needs, and expenditure for defense and similar competitive purposes still exceeds the welfare expenditure.

What this excellent description does not claim to provide is any sense of the way in which the welfare state tends to be open-ended at both sides, the way—within limits that need not be rigidly fixed in advance—the welfare state is an algebraic container that can be filled with the arithmetic of varying socio-political contents. Nor does it provide a sense of the welfare state as the outcome, not necessarily a "final" one, of prolonged social struggle to modulate and humanize capitalist society. It would be hard, perhaps impossible, to say to what extent the welfare state is the result of a deliberate intent to stabilize capitalist society from above, so that it will avoid breakdown and revolutionary crises; to what extent it is the outcome of relatively autonomous economic processes; and to what extent it is the partially realized triumph in the struggle of masses of men to satisfy their desires. As against those intellectuals who feel the major need for the immediate future to be a benevolent social engineering and those who see the welfare state as a device for maintaining, through diversions and concessions, the traditional forms of economic power, I would stress the idea that welfarism represents, both in achievements and potential, a conquest that has been *wrested* by the labor, socialist and liberal movements.

For radical intellectuals the welfare state presents a set of new difficulties. The bulk of the intellectuals, to be sure, have adapted only too easily to its comforts and inducements; a society with an enormously expanded need for administrators, teachers and cultural agents can offer position and prestige to intellectuals. But for those of us who wish to preserve a stance of criticism while avoiding the

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sterility of total estrangement, the welfare state has been an unsettling experience. Here are some of the characteristic responses of leftist intellectuals in the past few decades:

• *A feeling that the high drama (actually, the vicarious excitement) of earlier Marxist or "revolutionary" politics has been lost, and that in the relatively trivial struggles for a division of social wealth and power within a stable order there is neither much room nor need for intellectual activity.* By now, this response is simply tiresome. The snobbism of nostalgia can easily decline into a snobbism of abstention; but those who care to act within history as it is, no matter in how modest a way, must accept the possibilities of today in order to transform those of tomorrow.

• *A belief that the welfare state will, in effect, remain stable and basically unchanged into the indefinite future; that conflict will be contained within the limits prescribed by the welfare state; and that the problems of technique (e.g., how to administer a poverty program, how to retrain workers left jobless by automation) will supersede the "irresponsible" tradition of fundamental criticism.* By accepting the "givenness" not merely of the welfare state but also of its present forms and boundaries, this view underestimates the value of basic moral-political criticism. To cite a simple example: is the shameful failure to tear down the vast slum called Harlem due to difficulties in technique and administration or is it due to moral indifference, social timidity and racial meanness? Another example: whether poverty can be entirely abolished within the present society is not so much a matter for analysis or speculation as for experiment and action. Such an effort might well require a radical restructuring of the welfare state to include a large program of public works, a degree of economic planning and a new allotment of social resources; and what keeps it from being enacted is not so much difficulties in execution as a failure of social will, responsibility and imagination. If I am right in saying this, the traditional responses of the intellectual—even if these are dismissed in certain quarters as utopian, impractical, etc.—remain quite as necessary as in the past. It might be maintained that even for new proposals to alleviate social troubles within the present society a degree of utopian perspective and intellectual distance is required. For essential to such alleviation is a continued extension of the idea of the practical. One need not agree with Paul Goodman's general outlook or his schemes for social improve-

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ment in order to recognize that his recent utopian writings may have a more practical effect than the routinism and blundering of the practical men—and precisely because his writings are, in the current sense of things, less "practical."

• *A belief that the welfare state is characteristic of all forms of advanced industrial society; that it offers bread and television, palliatives and opiates, to disarm all potential opposition; and that it thereby perpetuates, more subtly but more insidiously than in the past, class domination.* Such views have recently become popular in academic circles which in part are profiting from those struggles of yesterday that made possible the advantages of today. Despite their seeming intransigence, these views strike me as essentially conservative—they lead to passivity, not action—and inhumane—they ignore, or minimize, the improvements in the immediate life-conditions of millions of human beings. Ignore or minimize, above all, the fact that the welfare state has meant that large numbers of working-class people are no longer ill-fed, ill-clothed and insecure, certainly not to the extent they once were. That automobile workers in Detroit can today earn a modest, if insufficient, income; that through union intervention they have some, if not enough, control over their work conditions; that they can expect pensions which are inadequate yet far better than anything they could have expected twenty years ago—all this is *good*: politically, socially, in the simplest human terms. To dismiss or minimize this enormous achievement on the lordly grounds that such workers remain "alienated" and show little awareness of their plight, is to allow ideology to destroy human sympathy.

Concerning these matters I want to quote some cogent remarks from the English writer Alisdair MacIntyre:

> It was only gradually that people in Britain became conscious of themselves as living in a society where a right to minimal standards of welfare was presupposed. . . . Even a modern affluent working class, even a working class with a socialist tradition . . . has to learn that the welfare state is *essentially a realm of conflict* in which the real benefits of welfare are always in danger of being undermined by defense spending, by the encroachments of private interests, or simply by inflation, and thus a realm in which it needs a good deal of running even to keep standing in the same place. So a working-class political

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> self-consciousness about welfare as a point at which elementary rights have continually to be reclaimed seems to be one of the preconditions of the maintenance of welfare in an advanced capitalist society. . . .
>
> The problem of a politics that goes further than this is partly the problem of a working class that sixty years ago had to set itself the goals of welfare and now has to find for itself new political goals. . . .

In contrast to these three attitudes toward the welfare state, let me suggest the following position. The struggles and issues raised within the welfare state are real, not mere diversionary shadow plays or trivial squabbles. They matter. They affect the lives of millions. Regardless of how mundane or inadequate the "level of consciousness" at which they are conducted, the struggles for social betterment within the welfare state merit our concern and involvement.

No magical solution is available for the problems faced by American radicals; if there were, someone would by now have discovered it. I am myself committed to the "coalition" approach suggested by Bayard Rustin and Michael Harrington: it proposes a loose and intermittent association of the major "progressive" forces in the country—labor, Negro, liberal, church groups, intellectuals, students—in order to work for current and intermediate goals. Socialism not being an immediate option, it is necessary for radicals, while continuing to speak for their views in full, also to try to energize those forces that are prepared to stretch the limits of the welfare state. Such a dynamic once set in motion, there may be possibilities for going still further; but any political approach that dismisses movements embodying the hard-won victories of yesterday, must doom itself to sectarian isolation today.

This strategy has many difficulties, not the least being that it isn't very dramatic. For young people who have just "made it" into radicalism, it sometimes seems insufficiently radical. But radicalism is neither a quantity nor a measure of purity and rectitude; it is a political outlook, and if a rough adaptation of Fabianism is a possibility, then we must seize upon it.

One reason for this political stress has been suggested by Meyer Schapiro: that American society is now significantly different from

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what it was thirty years ago, in that it formally accepts the values of social welfare, yet frequently does not work to realize those values. Among the consequences of this disparity between norm and reality are: the more complacent liberals feel, though they do not quite say, that there really are not many short-range goals still to be reached; the left-liberals have not succeeded, nor perhaps tried, to work out a clear program of immediate objectives such as they had a few decades ago; and the impression grows that problems are insoluble, or that those who claim to be solving them are mere hypocrites, etc.

Carey McWilliams has listed immediate problems for which the answer is *more* (welfare measures) and those for which the answer is *new* (automation, allocating national resources); his catalog is worth noticing if only to remind ourselves of the urgency of the obvious:

> Is a "great society" one that, on an ever larger scale, continues to despoil the environment? Are present budget priorities really designed to produce a "great society" or a caricature of one? Can we continue to guide our foreign policy with compulsive slogans: "anti-communism," "containment," "the free world"? How is the scale of the military budget to be determined? How is a policy of reconversion to be brought about? How should resources be allocated? Should we plan and for what? How do we propose to cope with the consequences of the scientific-technological revolution?

Now there is in our society an occasional effort, more often a half-effort, and sometimes a mere pretense of coping with such problems; but increasingly the result is to blur the issues and discredit the very idea of rational action. What happens more often than not has been pungently described, perhaps overstated a little, by Paul Goodman:

> "Education" means subsidizing schools to train National Science Foundation grade-getters for higher status and salaries in Research and Development, and as professional institutional personnel. "Urban Reconstruction" is the cabal of Washington, city party-bosses, real-estate promoters and automobile manufacturers to destroy neighborhoods and communities. . . . "Agriculture" is the underwriting of chain-grocers and *latifundia,*

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> pesticides, the eradication of farmers, and the enclosure of the countryside for motels. . . . "Political Economy" is the galloping Gross National Product, stepping up TV advertising, the unchecked aggrandizing of the broadcasting networks . . . and more highways when there are already too many cars. . . .
>
> . . . In the teeth of this magnitude of bucks, one cannot seriously point to the minimum wage of $1.25 (excluding many categories) or 10,000 in the Peace Corps (after three years and $300 million) or the anti-discrimination housing order (applied to a minority of cases). Indeed a good synonym for Liberalism is Tokenism. But where are good neighborhoods, or clean rivers, or rural reconstruction, or liberating education, or an effort to improve the quality of the standard of living, to countervail regimenting and brainwashing? . . . It is insulting to hear these people talk of a Great Society.

Old problems fester and new ones appear, threatening the precarious equilibrium of the welfare state. For the great temptation in thinking about the welfare state is to assume *in effect* what we deny in theory; that it is stable and static. The inner motions of economic development, the heavy impact of technology, the complicating effects of international politics—all disturb, if not dissolve, the seeming fixity of the welfare state. Perhaps the most immediately threatening force is the cybernetic revolution which cuts through technique, management and economy, with some of the following possible repercussions:

- We face the danger of drifting into a society in which there will appear new and fierce class divisions: not so much between owners and workers or even rich and poor, though these will persist, but between various skilled elites living in affluence and a stratum of permanent unemployables, an "underclass" consisting mainly of older workers, the young and the Negroes.
- The power and size of the trade unions seems certain to decline, even if they undertake—which they probably will not—bold steps to meet the new conditions.
- The problem of government intervention in economic life will become a sharper political issue than it has been these past several years.

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That such problems, inherently difficult enough, should come to the forefront simultaneously with the upsurge of the American Negroes is something of a tragedy. For automation threatens most severely the jobs that have been traditionally open to Negroes; it intensifies difficulties which, under the best of circumstances, would have been severe enough. (The recently fashionable "leftist" counterposition of "revolution" against "integration" as strategies for the Negro movement fails to take into account the context in which the movement must act: it fails to recognize that to achieve integration, even in the presumably limited terms proposed by Martin Luther King, would indeed *be* a revolution, probably greater in consequence and impact than that effected by the rise of industrial unionism in the thirties.) Bayard Rustin, the most perceptive of the Negro leaders, has remarked upon this problem:

> The civil rights movement, because of its limited success, is now confronted with the problem that major Negro demands cannot be met within the context of the civil rights struggle. The frustration in the Negro community is not merely the result of difficulties in the struggle, but also of the fact that these demands are made in a context where *the Negro alone* is in motion. So that the major problem before us is how to relieve the Negro of this isolation. If there were a democratic left in this country, the Negro movement would be in it along with labor, liberals, and intellectuals and people from the churches.
>
> But now the Negroes have to deal not only with discrimination but also the problems of the whole society. While many Negroes would not so analyze it, they know in a visceral way that this is true. They know there is really no way to get jobs for Negroes unless something else happens. And they also know, and I know, that the labor movement, affected by automation, is itself unable to provide jobs for the people already enrolled in the unions; that the only way labor can handle this problem is if it allies with the Negro in a bigger struggle in which it can then afford to be an ally because its problems are being simultaneously met. . . . Such an alliance should be programmatic-political: that is, around questions like total employment, limited planning, work training within planning and a public-works program.

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Nathalie Sarraute

FLAUBERT

Books that have real vitality continue to perturb and sway the course of literature for a long time, and periodically we see them emerge from their remoteness to come join the fray, participate in the struggles of the day, side with one camp or the other, share in its defeat or victory.

This happened with Stendhal just after the last war. His dry, direct, perfectly natural, matter-of-fact style, without trace of bombast or desire to please, stark to excess, transparent and invisible, a style through which one passes to achieve a goal one feels urgently driven to reach, was considered a model for the most modern writing. It was the *dernier cri,* and well-known writers did not hesitate to copy it.

Just now we all have one *maître,* Flaubert, whose work, it is unanimously agreed, is the precursor of today's novel. His work is said to correspond to the problems and demands of the contemporary writer—a point which is never questioned.

But beyond this point have appeared certain differences of opinion that are defended by reasoning which is frequently contradictory. Some claim Flaubert's work, some the ideas he expressed concerning it or on literature in general, while others claim both his ideas and his work, in which they discover features that foreshadow and justify their own endeavors.

For some, Flaubert is the father of the present-day novel, the novelist whose work marks the appearance of modern literature, because he was the first for whom form played a predominant role. Form, they say, was the object of his research; all his concern, all his anxiety as a writer, was centered on form. And indeed the tortures, the long martyrdom, to which this concern with fine writing sub-

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jected him are well known: the famous *"gueuloir,"* in which he tested the harmonies and sonorities of his phrases; his complaints about the impossibility of expressing oneself, about the difficulties inherent in language, that "diabolical prose" which he was constantly, breathlessly, pursuing. "My head is swimming and my throat raw from having hunted, sweated, dug, turned inside out, ransacked and shouted in countless different ways a sentence that is now finally finished. It is a good one, that I can guarantee, . . ." "To write well, that's all. . . ." One could find many such quotations.

This has led some people to the conclusion that for Flaubert all that counted was form. Expression, not content. And they see proof of this fact in declarations like the following, which have become famous from having been so frequently quoted and requoted in recent years: "I should like to write books in which one had only to compose sentences," or, "What I call beauty, what I should like to do, would be a book about *nothing,* a book that had no tie with the outside. . . ."

In other words, pure form, whose content, we are told, is unimportant. Language that refers to nothing but itself, that refuses to do service. This is the model, the example, cited in support of current notions about the real content of the novel; this is the justification for the theories advocating the quest for pure form without concern for the substance that form reveals.

But it is idle to discuss an author's theories without considering the results of those theories.

In order, therefore, to inject a bit of life and truth into this discussion, we shall have to examine Flaubert's own novels. Let us see, then, to what this arduous quest of form led, what was the result of all this gigantic effort. But first let us examine this form, this language, which is supposed to be self-sufficient, as though it were really the only content of these works.

For this we must try to forget all preconceived ideas, all critical commentary on this language, and force ourselves to enter into the direct, ingenuous contact with it that all works of art, however timeworn, however familiar, demand. We must forget, too, all controversy, and try to read as though for the first time, concentrating, to begin with, upon the writing alone, independent of meaning.

For instance, let us take just any page from *Salammbô,* which has been promoted to the rank of masterpiece. For here, more than in

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any of Flaubert's novels, psychology is nonexistent, description all important and style increasingly his sole concern.

Leafing through it at random—I could quote from almost any page—let us take these few sentences. And I suggest they be given a second reading.

> At last they recognized Hamilcar's Trireme.
>
> She came on proudly like a wild thing, her yard-arm straight and her sail bellying throughout the length of her mast, cleaving the foam around her; her huge oars kept time as they struck the water: every now and then the end of her keel would appear, shaped like a ploughshare; and the ivory-headed horse, rearing its two feet under the spur at the end of the prow, seemed to be galloping on the plains of the sea.[1]

And these:

> Her hair, violet-powdered and gathered into a tower in the manner of Canaanitish maids, added to her stature. Chains of pearls fell from her temples to the corners of the half-open rose pomegranate which was her mouth. Upon her breast was a cluster of glowing stones, iridescent as moray scales. Her diamonded arms issued bare from her sleeveless tunic, which was of a deep black starred with red flowers. Between her ankles she wore a golden chainlet to regulate her steps, and her great dark purple mantle, made from an unknown fabric, trailed behind her, shaping itself to a wide wave billowing upon each of her footsteps.

There is no need to stress the peculiar rhythm of these passages, or to insist upon their unwieldiness and rigidity, which is, after all, generally recognized. We observe that they never rush forward recklessly, as though borne along in spite of themselves towards some unpredictable evolution; nor do they reel and lurch as though unaware of where they are going. There's no groping, none of the trembling caused by the shock of contact with some unknown thing that resists; none of the suppleness, the pliancy made indispensable by the need to cling to a substance that is constantly moving, giving way—which we find, for instance, in Proust.

1. Translated by E. Powys Mathers. London: The Pushkin Press, 1947.

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Here no risks are taken. There is no question of charging blindly ahead. There are no sudden breakthroughs, no violent shocks, no explosions, as in Saint-Simon, for example. Never any impetuosity or disorder, not the slightest casualness.

The fictional substance is first isolated, then immobilized, carefully contained. We advance prudently, only after making certain of already conquered ground; there's plenty of time. Slowly the sentence is deployed, but the reader, forewarned, knows already that no danger threatens it. It will neither demur, stammer, tremble, come apart nor leap up; no plunge into the void is possible. Gently it takes fresh breath, then the *and* that appears with such surprising monotony announces that it is about to start again, on its way to the inevitable end that awaits it on this last lap. The *and,* which the reader senses as though fascinated, and which never fails to appear, is there, reassuring and comfortable, like the seats placed on stair-landings to allow us to rest for a moment before climbing the last flights.

This *and,* which surprised Proust because it did not correspond to its usual function, is the pivot on which most of these sentences turn whenever they reach a certain length. The *and* appears and from then on we wend our way peacefully towards the end.

Again I shall read at random:

> When he rose his entire attitude was one of serene fearlessness, impervious to mercy, to dismay, . . .

For a moment the sentence remains suspended in air, we might even be apprehensive, despite the fact that its swaying foreshadows an approaching cadence. But now comes the *and*:

> *and* because he was suffocating he went up to the top of the tower that overlooked Carthage.

Here we can rest, catch our breath. Something definitive has been achieved. We've looped the loop. Then the immense, laborious effort is resumed, we start again:

> The town sank downwards in a long hollow curve of cupolas and temples, of golden roofs and houses, of clusters of palm trees here and there, . . .

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This *here and there* in the midst of these stiff sentences is like a brief quiver, a second of exceptional liberty constituting no threat to security, a mere instant during which something stirs then, once more, turns to stone:

> of clusters of palm trees here and there, and of glass balls shooting fire; . . .

The *and* can't be far now and, in fact, here it is:

> shooting fire; and the ramparts formed as it were the gigantic rim of this horn of plenty which poured itself out before him.

Time, to be mastered, is taken captive, broken up and imprisoned, placed under lock and key, consigned to safekeeping. And so it goes, as anthology piece follows anthology piece in rapid succession.

Occasionally, for a brief second, time stretches ponderously from one period to the other. Such words as *meanwhile, thereupon, so,* and above all *then* (*alors*)—like a solemn trumpet-call opening the festivities—announce that time has resumed its course, that from the phrase just ended an extension is about to emerge, another heavy mass is forming.

> *Then,* despairing of the Republic, Hamilcar. . . .
> *Then,* many a one recalled similar mornings when. . . .
> *Then,* four heroes chosen for their strong lungs. . . .

These *thens* appear constantly, by the hundreds, and at times one has the impression of a stylistic tic that is hard to believe of a writer so concerned with achieving absolute perfection of form.

But the reading I have just given is of a very special nature. It has to do exclusively with form, with a certain quality of style. I could just as well have pointed out certain other characteristics of Flaubert's style, discussed, for instance, the use of certain verbal forms that are peculiarly his own. But I wanted to call attention only to what was relevant to my argument. This reading, consequently, is the reading of a specialist, so to speak, as circumscribed, limited and artificial as would be that of a grammarian. It demands great effort on the part of the reader.

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But do we read like this? Obviously, we do not. Our view is a broader one that takes in *everything* the words suggest to us. For words, whether we want them to or not, have significance. Unlike musical sounds, plastic shapes or colors, they do not assert themselves as such, are not self-sufficient. They are perceived as having meaning and are necessarily dependent upon it. No reader ever reads a text as though it were in a foreign language whose meaning he could not follow. If this were the case, he would very soon lay the book down. Words, then, fortunately or unfortunately, are tied to a meaning with which we never cease to charge them.

If, therefore, I were to reread these passages, if we reread them the way any reader does, we should see, to begin with, that what we have here is descriptive writing. This is the result neither of chance nor choice. I did not look for it. For it is well known that description is the dominant feature of Flaubert's books. It might even be said that his entire work is nothing but a vast succession of descriptive passages, that through description, his famous objectivity and beauty of form are realized.

Shall we then take a brief look at these descriptions? Their principal virtue, a parnassian one, is utmost precision. The stiff, unwavering sentence immobilizes its object and confers upon it outlines that neither tremble nor blur. We follow every detail of these outlines, details that have been chosen to make the picture stand out. The sharp lines, the exact shades of color, the brilliance of style, the rather solemn swaying of these beautiful, rhythmic, perfectly constructed sentences, act as a glaze that will protect the picture from the wear of time and guarantee it eternal life. And so we look. The words are there inviting us to do so.

(Just here, I must beg your indulgence. I warned you that I was going to regard this work without preconceived ideas and as though it were a recent event. Now let's be quite sincere and say what these beautifully chiseled, rhythmical sentences evoke in us.)

The words, heavy with meaning, as much because of what they signify as because of their sound, their place, their relationship to one another, create images in us.

They force us to draw and paint pictures in our mind's eye—the task that descriptive form constantly demands of the reader. And so, as the lulling sentences succeed one another, we hastily compose pictures, lovely pictures, noble in line and rich in color. But once the

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first moment of wonder has passed, if we examine the pictures we paint, we see that there is something dubious, disturbing even, about their charm.

The fact is that these pictures are very different from those offered us by good painting. Words, and words alone, for which we must supply the content—which, in and of themselves, are nothing —permit us to see them. So we do our utmost, we work hard, we hunt through our store of recollections. Hamilcar's trireme is mentioned and the words bring to mind the sumptuous splendors of Carthage; we read of a sail bellied the length of its mast, and immediately all the masts and sails that make us construct this particular mast and sail come crowding into memory. And here is *our* foam, here are *our* keels, which resemble *our* ploughshares. Here, too, is the ivory-headed horse, rearing as it races across the sea, *our* immense sea, which stretches out like *our* plains. But are these things that we manufacture so hurriedly really what we should presume to call works of art? Where do these reminiscences come from? How did we come by these prefabricated objects in our stockrooms, these vast series of identical objects from which we draw samples? What common denominator exists between these mental pictures and a work of art, a canvas like those painted by Flaubert's contemporary, Delacroix, for instance? When we look at a Delacroix painting, every line, every juxtaposition of color impinges upon us directly, without our having to make the effort to substitute other lines and other colors of our own. Our effort begins with the picture as it is shown us, with this picture and no other, then shifts to an ineffable something beyond it which, for the first time, has been revealed to us by lines and colors and gives us pure esthetic delight.

But the task set us by Flaubert and the Parnassians is one of fabricating mental pictures, and no doubt the hostility that Flaubert's style has so frequently encountered comes from the effort he demands of us as well as from its results.

For our recollections of triremes and ivory horses dashing through foam are, alas, both flat and conventional. They are like paintings of dubious quality; their beauty of form and their brilliance give us the same sort of pleasure. Only subjective description, one that is distorted and purged of all impurities, can keep us from making it adhere to a preexistent, necessarily conventional picture.

This is a far cry from the modern quest for pure sensation, from

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the pursuit of what is most alive, most pressing, which makes the traditional sentence explode and gives words new meaning, or else deforms and invents them, as in Rimbaud, Mallarmé and Joyce. For these writers the problem was no longer to shut us up among pictures composed of familiar features we recognized, but to rid us of these features in order to give us fresh impressions, impressions that can be used only once, and which, later, will increase our stock of reminiscences, and constitute a danger for future writers who oblige us to evoke them.

This descriptive form, which establishes Flaubert in the role of precursor and master of some current writers who are nevertheless opposed to tradition and whose form is very different from his—their fallacy, therefore, is hard to understand—is the essential basis on which the greater part of his work rests.

It pervades *Salammbô,* of which it is the only substance. It fills the *Education Sentimentale,* which is entirely made up of short sketches devoid of psychological complexity, which fascinate us primarily as portrayals of manners and customs.

Just here I uttered the dangerous word "psychological," a word that is much decried and today grown obsolete, it appears, because it recalls traditional analysis of motives and the entire gamut of outdated psychological concepts. This is not the psychology I refer to, but the revelation, the availability of hitherto unknown psychic forces, the creation of a mental universe that is the basis of all writing and which no literary form can do without. When it does, psychology takes its revenge.

Language, as I said before, refers us back to meaning. And if language is empty, the reader, whether consciously or not, will fill it. With what, then, can he fill the *Education Sentimentale*? With mental pictures, descriptions of masked balls and richly spread tables, with the boudoirs of courtesans or "honest" women, with woodland strolls and all kinds of sentiments: a romantic affair presented in its most conventional aspect, its simplest, most superficial form. This is an emotion characteristic of youth which, had it been explored in depth and presented in all its complexity, could have been the revelation of a living reality and possessed all the force of its conviction. But in *L'Education Sentimentale* it has retained only its literary, its most commonplace aspects. It has none of the qualities peculiar to the yearnings and dreams of adolescence, none of their engaging, naïve and some-

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what elusive charm, all of which are to be found in the first *Education Sentimentale,* which Flaubert wrote at twenty-three.

In the second *Education,* written in middle age, a heavy, precise, adult's vision removes from Frédéric's love for Madame Arnoux the down of youth that would have made all those empty longings fed on false mystery acceptable. This realistic vision rubs off on Frédéric's love and, as a result, it is too often made to appear as a sort of ridiculous subservience to a prevailing mode, to pure convention. We are surprised to see that Flaubert seems to lack perspective about these sentiments nurtured on bad literature. But it is evident in his book that psychological reality is not what interests him. For us, reading it today, there remains the interest aroused by the re-creation of an epoch, the portrayal of a certain society.

The fact that Lukács, like many before him, should have considered this novel as one of the masterpieces of literature is also surprising. For Lukács, what gives it its exemplary character is time. Time, he says, "unifies the fragments of reality . . . which are merely juxtaposed in their rigidity, their incoherence, their isolation." Time gives them a reality which exists as such: a concrete, organic continuum, dynamic and alive, thus conferring upon the novel an authentically epic quality.

But in what way does this time that extends over a long period and carries with it, in an uninterrupted flow, dissimilar elements subjected to a chronological order differ from the other time of the traditional novel, which gave so many works of fiction, both good and bad, their unity, as well as their factitious, heart-rending melancholy?

And so, people will say, that's all there is to Flaubert? A pompous, frigid style that makes us evoke and fabricate cheap mental images? A lack of psychological complexity that makes *Salammbô* a picture book for children and reduces the *Education Sentimentale* to a ponderous portrayal of manners and customs? A curious naïveté that makes him consider respectfully and portray seriously passions which, because of their prosaically conventional nature, occasionally border upon the ridiculous?

This, then, is the work of Flaubert? And my answer is: Yes. But in spite of this, and even to a certain extent because of it, Flaubert is one of the great precursors of the modern novel. For all of these defects made it possible for him to write a masterpiece: *Madame Bovary.*

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I repeat: all of these defects. The redundant, coldly "fine" writing, the dubious imagery, the conventional sentiments, the *trompe-l'oeil* reality. But this time—and herein lies all the difference—the *trompe-l'oeil* is presented as such.

Everything that had been hard to accept in Flaubert's work contributes to the perfection of this novel. Here Flaubert's defects become virtues. They are transformed by something that has the importance of an immense discovery. A new world vision, an unknown substance, has burst upon the novel.

If it were necessary to furnish proof that what is important in writing is the unearthing, or re-creation of a new psychic substance, no work could better serve this purpose than *Madame Bovary.*

This new element, this unknown reality, which Flaubert was the first to make the material of a book, is what has since been called inauthenticity.

In the *Education Sentimentale* Flaubert lost his perspective. Consequently, confusing convention and reality, neglecting psychological complexity to indulge his love of beautiful description, of anthology pieces, he also lost the game.

At times he himself had a presentiment of failure, for reasons (as happens with writers) that are not ours, not those of his readers. He felt that something was wrong, that the "true psychological state" which "has not yet been described . . . withdraws the very things that are the most interesting to a more remote plane . . ." and he added, "I touch upon many subjects the ultimate depths of which one would like to see."

Here this "true psychological state"—if I may be permitted this opinion—would again be the portrayal of an inauthentic emotion. These depths are indeed what one would like to see, because they exist, as they do in *Madame Bovary.* Flaubert's attention, however, was so diverted by appearances that he either did not, or would not, see them.

But although he lost that game, with *Madame Bovary* he won. For in *Madame Bovary* all the conditions are favorable, everything concurs toward success.

Here, to pursue his quest to the end, to see through appearances, to discover a new fictional substance and give it life, Flaubert chose the right position, at once remote and yet entirely committed. This is the source of the extraordinary insights conferred by repulsion and

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hatred, as also of the fondness for what one has experienced oneself that mingles with it. This blend is what gives *Madame Bovary* its percussive force and complexity, its great subtlety.

Here a new material forces Flaubert to concentrate his entire attention and all his energies upon it; it keeps him from getting lost or mired in what it cannot utilize. Here every nuance of style, every detail of the form and all its defects, particularly its defects, give life to this hitherto unknown fictional substance.

There is no need to explain what this consists of. As I said before, it is what today we call "inauthenticity." We all remember that *trompe-l'oeil* universe, the world as seen through the eyes of Madame Bovary: her desires, her imaginings, the dreams on which she seeks to build her existence, all of which are made up of a succession of cheap images drawn from the most debased, discredited forms of romanticism. One has only to recall her adolescent daydreams, her marriage, her love of luxury, her vision of the lives led by the "upper crust," of "artistic and Bohemian" circles, of Parisian life, her periods of fervent mysticism, her mother-love, her sex life—all roles that she was continually playing for others and for herself—and which were based on the most platitudinous of conventions.

And these proved to be what fertilized the novel.

An example may be found in the descriptions of the ball given by the Marquis de la Vaubyessard. As in the *Education Sentimentale,* this could have been a total failure. But the fact that it is seen through Madame Bovary's eyes saves the day. The extraordinarily watchful gaze of this book-fed petty-bourgeoise is what gives these pictures their intensity, their force, their background setting, and occasionally, as in the following passage, their subtlety and ambiguity.

The success of this passage, it seems to me, is complete. It is taken from the account of the ball:

> Scattered about amongst the dancers, or chatting in doorways, a few men (some fifteen or so) between the ages of twenty-five and forty, stood out from the crowd by reason of a certain family likeness, however different their age, dress or features.
>
> Their clothes, which were better cut, appeared to be of a better quality cloth, and their hair brushed forward in ringlets towards their temples, seemed to be lustred with more refined

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> pommades. They had the complexion of wealth, the sort of pallor that is set off by the whiteness of fine porcelain, the sheen of satin, the gloss of beautiful furniture, and which is maintained in its state of health by means of a sober diet of exquisite foods. Their necks rotated freely above low cravates; their long side-whiskers fell over turned-down collars; they wiped their lips on handkerchiefs embroidered with large initials, and which gave forth a delicate scent. Those who were beginning to age looked youthful, while there was an air of maturity in the faces of the younger men. Their indifferent eyes reflected the tranquility of passions regularly gratified, and underneath their gentle manners one sensed the rather special brutality which comes from dominating not wholly easy things that test one's strength and titillate one's vanity, the handling of thorough-bred horses and the company of loose women.

Here the clichés have a dual significance.

The picture we see is in itself a pure convention. For what these characters seek to project is a picture of themselves, characterized by the most complete conformity to the fashions of a time and the manners of a caste. This picture, which they paint with their entire persons, their clothes, their facial expressions, their interests, their mode of life, their sentiments, is eagerly absorbed by Madame Bovary, it is imprinted on her, fused with other pictures drawn from all her reading and daydreaming. This finish composed of pictures and ideas which for years she had gone over and over, reexamined, reworked and perfected countless times, makes it stand out, shimmer, acquire a subtlety that a first, perfectly fresh, ingenuous view could not give it, one that only the experienced eye of the connoisseur can seize. Here Madame Bovary and Flaubert are one. In fact, this might be the perfect illustration for his famous *"la Bovary, c'est moi."*

The description of a conventional image, of this collection of clichés, constituted by these characters in their roles of fashionable aristocrats of the time, is projected onto other clichés, onto those that make up Madame Bovary's world. And this play of the different *trompes-l'oeil,* reacting to one another, confers upon this description a subtlety and sheen that are rarely equaled.

Thanks to a precise, subtly elegant form, as the reader reproduces what is going on in Madame Bovary, he perceives an image that has all the force of poetry and beauty. Only here the poetry and beauty

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—and this is what gives them their strange charm and fascination—have for him something equivocal and suspect since the reader is not only Madame Bovary but also Flaubert, and since he sees both the poetry and the beauty from the same objective position.

Appearances are unmasked, and the opening through which they are exposed changes this beautiful form of dubious quality into an art form.

Equally fine, astonishing even, by reason of its virtuosity and modernism, is the famous scene at the Agricultural Show during which, between the platitudes pronounced on stage by the county-councillor, then by M. Derozerays, and the subtler, more secretive ones that Madame Bovary's lover Rodolphe is whispering into her ear, there is established a sort of counterpoint. At times the two discourses seem to prolong each other with no transition, separated by a simple interval; at others, they appear to be the responses of a skillfully composed duet.

The commonplaces spoken by Rodolphe, his tasteless refinement, his false sincerity, his complacent disdain for the proprieties, his cheap sentiments, stand out, heightened, against the coarser platitudes of the official speeches, the clichés of which are admirably set off by Rodolphe's amorous declarations and philosophical comments.

In *Madame Bovary,* through the rift in appearances, we are constantly in the presence of a fictional substance so remarkably recreated that it retains all the complexity and richness of a living substance. In this novel, therefore, authentic emotions may be seen to start with the tritest of clichés, as when Emma's daydreams about Rodolphe and Love lead to an emotion that is impossible to distinguish from genuine, passionate love of less impure origin.

Inversely, a sincere sentiment occasionally leads to a cliché. This happens in the case of Léon's love which, after being described as any spontaneous love would be, suddenly changes into a shoddy sentiment. In the portrayal of the love that exists between Léon and Emma:

> They were so completely wrapped up in the possession of each other that they believed themselves to be in their own home, where they would live until death should part them, like an eternally young newly-wedded couple. . . .

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There is a sudden letdown, the cliché appears:

> He admired her spiritual exaltation and her lace-trimmed skirt. Besides, was she not in fashionable society, and a married woman! a real mistress, in short? . . . She was the *inamorata* of all the novels, the heroine of every play, the vague *she* in all the poetry books. . . .

But everywhere in this book there is the subtlest art, the only exceptions, it seems to me, being the beginning and the ending where, as it happens, Madame Bovary does not appear. These lack, therefore, her vision of life, which, by constantly causing reality to oscillate, exposes it as *trompe-l'oeil.* The beginning and the ending of *Madame Bovary* become fixed in commonplace descriptions treated with oversimplified, occasionally crass realism.

This beginning and this ending could lead us to believe, as could *Salammbô* and the *Education Sentimentale,* that Flaubert was not entirely aware of his discovery and of its rare achievement. I myself believe this. It is not possible for a living work based entirely upon pure sensation, as is every authentic work of art, for a work with its roots extending deep into the unconscious from which it derives its sap to exist entirely, with its profound meanings and repercussions, in the clear consciousness of its author. It is neither possible nor desirable.

And no better proof of this could be found than in that other novel by Flaubert, *Bouvard et Pécuchet,* in which everything that had been confusedly foreshadowed in *Madame Bovary* is clearly conceived.

Here again inauthenticity constitutes the substance of the novel. However, there is no longer any question for Flaubert of re-creating complex, ambiguous, extraordinarily subtle sensations; it is rather of carrying out the intellectual project of showing the futility of knowledge on the level of popularization. The result is a platitudinous description of the efforts made by two "little men" to equip their empty lives and minds by successively studying and putting into practice all, or nearly all, of the branches of learning of their day: agronomy, chemistry, history, archaeology, medicine and hygiene, politics, education, religion, etc.

It is so obvious that the residue of any debased, half-digested human knowledge will be composed of platitudes that I, for one, find this long demonstration tedious. This kaleidoscope of rudimentary

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learning, though it may be of intellectual interest and foreshadow some of the criticisms that are made of mass culture, does not and cannot possess any of the virtues of a work of art, virtues which, as we have seen, all converge in *Madame Bovary*.

The extraordinary importance of this work, which prepared the way for modern literature and the modern theater, makes us doubt the reality of Flaubert's literary theories, as interpreted by those who are determined to see him as a pure creator of forms.

And in fact, most of the statements on this subject in his letters show that, for him, form and substance were inseparable.

As for instance: "There are no brilliant thoughts without brilliant forms, and the other way round."

Or else: "There is more to art than straightness of line and smoothness of surface. The breadth of an idea is greater than that of its *plastique*. . . . The more brilliant the idea, the more sonorous the sentence."

Or this: "Precision of thought produces (and is itself) precision of words."

And again: "Our objective must be seriously pondered before we start thinking of form, which will only turn out well if we are obsessed by the illusion of our subject."

Any number of these quotations could be found.

But, people say, in all these ideas, as in his admiration for Boileau, Flaubert is still a nineteenth-century writer. And my reply is: In these ideas, which are based on his genuine experience, he remains a writer for all time. If he were not, he would be merely a champion of the art of fine, empty language, as practiced by countless "men of letters" who are today forgotten.

And yet he is undeniably a precursor of the modern novelist.

To begin with, as we have already seen, the contemporary novel and theater have not yet exhausted the wealth of his contribution.

Then, through his explicit statements, he foretold, even invoked, the literature of the future.

When he wrote: "What I should like to do is to write a book about nothing, a book that has no ties with the outside. . ." I cannot believe that he had in mind a succession of fine, empty sentences. For he added: "A book that had almost no subject, or rather, one in which the subject were almost invisible, if this were possible. The finest works are those that contain the least material; the closer the

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expression approaches the thought, the more the word clings to it and disappears, the finer it is. I believe that the future of art lies in this direction."

Might not this book about nothing be one in which the unknown substance could appear in a state of purity, without the support of characters or plot? A new psychological substance that could virtually do without support?

We know that when Flaubert was considering the material for *Madame Bovary,* his first intention was to show her leading a life devoid of action, a prisoner of her lonely, sterile old maid's daydreaming. And his idea was to seize this new psychic substance, this liberated psychic substance, in motion, (because for Flaubert, there was no greater crime for the writer than to repeat the discoveries of his predecessors, no other obligation than to discover something new). In fact, he wrote: "Nor does it appear impossible to give psychological analysis the rapidity, sharpness and fervency of purely dramatic narration. This has never been attempted and it would be splendid."

Books about nothing, almost devoid of subject, rid of characters, plots and all the old accessories, reduced to pure movement, which brings them into proximity with abstract art; are these not the goals toward which the modern novel tends? And this being so, can there be any doubt that Flaubert was its precursor?

(Translated from the French by Maria Jolas)

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Judson Jerome

THE COMMON SENSE OF EVERETT BJORKMAN

Since the radio had gone out, he could get no news. Loose connection, Everett Bjorkman figured—or a tube, he thought, more technically. Without news, without even music, or ads, he was feeling detached, or groggy, or balmy, he thought, feeling for the word. One is not often left so helplessly alone with his own mind as when, driving home from the city, between five and five-thirty (he glanced at his watch; the hands appeared to be spinning; but no matter—he knew it was between five and five-thirty), the radio suddenly quits. All he could do was read signs.

He was later to reflect that he would have done better not to have read them at all, for, of course, he read the wrong ones, and for the first time in all these years of living in the village, he somehow turned off the highway a block too soon, on a street he had never noticed, never knew existed. He had gone on for some way before realizing that everything was strange. Now, the reins limp in his hands, he eased down the leaf-strewn street in swirls of twilight. The air was unusually winey and warm for Idaho; his wool suit was scratchy; and the evening, extraordinarily bright for these shortening days, was sudden and tropically golden. Dry oak and elm and maple and mango leaves whispered under the quiet wheels. Children stopped play to look at him, wiping their hands absently on their pinafores, clenching their hoops by their waists, appearing, somehow, all to be of the same age, like a row of birds on a wire, following him with solemn stares. Here and there a woman sat in a doorway churning or shelling peas or carding wool.

His wife would be worrying. He thought of her, faceless, pacing the rumpus room. And he really had little idea of where this street was taking him. Ahead he saw blue neon flickering to create the illu-

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sion of rotating motion—a tavern, The Stone Wheel. He would stop in there, ask directions, call home, perhaps have a pint . . . though that was silly, he realized. He could not be more than five minutes from home, where he imagined the martini pitcher chilling in the freezer—and if he hurried he might catch the news on TV.

The bartender was bare to the waist, which was odd, considering the season, and black, which was odd, considering the neighborhood. He wore a black felt beret and a large soft gold serpent ring, spiraling his finger in fat coils. Everett rested a moment in the doorway fighting off a wave of vertigo, using the time efficiently to look around the bar, half hoping to find television so that he wouldn't have to hurry—or at least a public telephone in a booth so that the endearments he expected to exchange with his wife would not echo foolishly in the quiet room. He straightened his tie and gave the bartender a consciously ingratiating smile.

"The Left is for penetration," the bartender said with sullen belligerence. He was standing with his great arms folded comfortably across his chest, staring straight at Everett, but Everett realized within a few minutes that the remark was not directed at him.

Out on the gallery, beyond the half-opened Dutch door, sat an old man cradling a pewter mug which gleamed coolly in the last light. The man did not glance back at the bartender, but seemed to be crooning to the sea as he answered, lifting his chin with a tremble, his voice velvety, lyrical, "What has become of love? What has become of tradition?" He said the last word more with the sound of *s* than of *sh,* causing Everett to speculate that he was probably unmarried—the sort one found in bars.

"Have you a telephone?" Everett asked the bartender, mildly.

"Terms of enslavement," snarled the bartender, still standing grandly impassive as a Gurkha guard behind the long teak bar, his eyes on Everett. "The Right is in decay," he said. "Even now, as we speak, the future is crossing the sands of Africa like the edge of night, like a wave. We are gathering strength, like the ooze of oil crushed."

Everett gave him a kind of winking smile, intended to conciliate for a moment the wave of the future. He was not one to lose his footing in a hotbed, he knew. He couldn't afford to be, in his line. He hitched his holster and strode to the bar, put his foot on the rail, and looked vaguely around the cash register for Sal Hepatica. "Let me have a pint," he said at least.

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"A pint of what?"

Everett thought the question an invasion of privacy. He resolved to attend to his immediate needs and leave. "Do you have Sal Hepatica?" he asked.

But the bartender's attention had returned to the man on the gallery. He swung toward him now and shouted out toward the sea, "Who can afford love? Who can afford tradition? The future is a duty which obliterates all other demands, like the tide wiping clean the margin of the sea!" Everett had often noted that those of he bartender's race tended to overuse the word *like*. "Next," the bartender challenged the man on the gallery, "next," he repeated, "you will speak to me of marriage." As he spoke he pulled a mug off the shelf behind him, put it under the spigot and pumped vigorously until foam rolled over the side.

"With an egg," Everett said, brightening.

"The dark starving masses of the world are in arms and you speak to me of marriage," said the bartender, breaking an egg into the mug and grinding the shell underfoot. He set the mug before Everett with a knock. "Love is an invention of the baronial caste, left over from chivalric days, an anti-masque to the cult of the Virgin—purely European, purely aristocratic, purely decadent," the bartender was saying.

Everett thoughtfully sipped his Sal Hepatica.

"I do not speak to you of marriage," the man on the gallery crooned to the sea, his chin rising and trembling as he spoke, then subsiding with a quiver.

The bartender whirled to the cash register and came down on it with two hands like a pianist striking a chord. Two cherries and a lemon appeared in the cash register window. Everett felt in his pocket for change.

"Soon you will speak to me of families," the bartender said savagely, then, over his shoulder to Everett, hardly modulating his tone, "Two cherries and a lemon."

Everett paid him and took his mug out onto the gallery. Below him gulls banked and screamed like rusty hinges. A tiny figure could be discerned on the rocks below tossing peeled shrimp into the air, and Everett marveled that even in the dusk the birds could catch the bits before they fell. He was not a man who often permitted himself

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these still moments—and he realized with a rush of blood how much he had lost in his haste, how his insatiable lust for success had consumed his spirit, how much each day required time such as this, on the gallery, washed by the salty evening breeze, observing (and his mind relished the word, repeating it: observing) the ruddy-bellied high clouds and evening's wide tranquillity. Perhaps he should stop by here each evening, until he could get the radio fixed, to regain his touch with wheeling gulls and the common people, he thought, sipping his bitter drink.

"Going to leap?" asked an insinuating voice at his elbow, and Everett turned just in time to see the quavering (unshaven) chin lowering. He looked down the precipice in horror, in spite of his insurance, thinking of the many loved ones who would be grieved. He noticed a telephone booth about halfway down, a lighted glass box, slightly tilted, as though it had been dropped and had landed miraculously intact.

"I was thinking of calling my wife," he said.

"She will never hear you."

"But if I could reach that booth . . ."

"It is so far down!"

"Why don't you try the stairs?"

"I had forgotten about them."

"Wait. I'll follow you."

"Gladly," said the man. "I am always eager to assist a person," he added, raising his voice so that the bartender would overhear, "who is motivated by domestic, commercial or patriotic considerations." He shuffled back to his table, drained his mug, took his three-cornered hat off a peg, pulled up a trap-door in the floor of the gallery, and disappeared down a steep, iron, circular stair which wound around a central pole.

As Everett's head ducked beneath the gallery floor the sea breeze whipped his hair and tie, riffled through his clothing like girls frisking him for money. Instinctually he reached for his wallet, which was safe. Just then he heard the clank of, he speculated, his mug, which must have been blown off the rail by a sudden gust. He looked up to see the fizzy liquid drip through the floor boards, strands of egg white extending themselves like spiders lowering on filaments of web. He was getting wet. He turned up his coat collar.

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The old man maintained a breakneck speed, and Everett found the run exhilarating, heels clanging on the stairs, his hand sliding around the central pole (exciting!), the wind gusting face and side and back and side and face. Once he glanced overhead, getting a glimpse of the spiraling stair winding upward and the yellow soles of the bartender's bare feet coming nimbly behind him. He wondered if he were being pursued, but panic gave way to giggling, and he spun down now with rattling rapidity, giggling in the wind, seeing nothing, feeling only the iron sliding smoothly under his palm and the regular triangles of the narrow stairs catching his feet.

When they reached the phone booth, which was marked MEN, he was panting heavily, exhausted by exercise and laughter. It did a fellow good to let go now and again. But Everett had a sense of discipline, too, and now he quickly pulled the folding door and shut off the roaring of the sea and wind, the crying of the gulls, the argument of the two men squatting outside on the stairs with their hands in one another's groin. Everett expelled a happy sigh and relieved himself, zipped, looking around for a washstand, finding nothing but glass walls and the telephone. The stillness, the odor, the tilting floor, all made him light-headed for a moment; he leaned against the wall and opened a package of Tums. These spilled, bounced on the floor like buttons and rolled into the pool which had collected in the downhill corner. Everett could see nothing outside in the windy night; he experienced an unaccustomed wave of self-consciousness as he thought of how he must look, lighted up in the glass box on the face of the cliff, and he assumed a business-like air as he turned to make his call.

As he searched his pocket for a coin, finding little but cherries, lemons and occasional plums, he tried to remember the number. There were rarely directories in places like this. At last there was nothing to do but dial and dial and hope he would happen on the right combination. The little silver hook that is intended to stop one's finger fell off with a clink when he came round for the first number, letting him wind on, like winding a toy, feeling the spring tightening and tightening, until it reached its limit; then he let it spin, whirring, a hundred turns, coming at last to rest. Unfortunately, his finger had wiped off the numbers, and he now had no idea which hole belonged where, but no matter—there she was.

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"Have I missed the news?" he asked.

"Are you drunk?"

"I have had very little to drink, but I am breathless from running downstairs."

"Sorry I made you come downstairs."

"I might have been in the tub."

"How are the children? Watching TV?"

"Probably. I can't keep track of them."

"Save me a martini?"

"Not bloody likely."

They sent kisses squeaking over the wire, then one and then the other hung up. Everett turned round and round, grinding Tums under his shoes, looking for the door. He was not a man to occupy a booth when others might be waiting. Had he not developed over the years an efficiency, which some mistook for brusqueness or aggressiveness, in communication, which was not only essential in his work but a habitual consideration, masked by masculinity, for others who might be waiting? He patted his palms on the glass on every side with growing impatience. Finally, for there are times for decisive action, he threw his shoulder heavily against the wall.

This, however, dislodged the booth from its precarious position on the rocks. It tilted slowly, like a falling tower, then toppled, falling end over end, spattering Everett thoroughly, rattling with Tums, down, down through the black air to the sea, where it splashed and floated. Even through the glass walls Everett could hear the protesting shrieks of the aroused gulls.

Everett was embarrassed by the uproar he had caused. In his prone position, supporting himself on one elbow, he searched around for the receiver, which had fallen off the hook, located it, and began dialing again for his wife, who would have to understand that there would be a further delay. Moreover, he could very easily become seasick with the rocking of his lighted box, and none of the Tums, by this time, were dry.

"Bjorkman here," he told her.

But she merely said he was not at home at the moment and hung up, leaving him very lonely. All in all she was a good sport, considering what she had been through and her origins (which term

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he always used to refer to her family), and it would have been pleasant to gab away the time with her.

But of course as a boy he had often had to amuse himself for hours at a time and he was not without his little devices. Kids nowadays, with television, movies, spectator sports and mechanical toys, simply do not know how to play, he thought, unzipping.

Toward morning he thought that perhaps he was too old, after all; he realized his mind was only on the news. He had beached some time ago and the glass grated on the sand as the box shifted in the gentle lapping of the water. There was no point in lying there any longer, thought Bjorkman, the early riser. He felt rumpled, soggy, unrested, unsatisfied, his mouth foul as it always was when he neglected his teeth the night before. Unwelcome dawn burned meanly across the water, glinting in his eyes, making the burning bulb in the ceiling of the booth look pale and futile. Everett took out his handkerchief to protect his fingers and twisted the hot bulb until it was extinguished, twisted and twisted until his wrist was tired, then pulled it out by the roots. At least a little fresh air came in through the hole it left. Everett put his lips to the hole and sucked, sucked; it was like drinking water and it got him very much aroused.

To his great surprise, as he pressed against the ceiling, sucking, it fell open, like a lid, and he was able to crawl out onto the wet sand. He laughed ironically—to think that all he had had to do, all that time, was press on the lid—not the walls, mind you, but the lid. It beat all. He brushed his trousers and stamped his feet to regain circulation, straightened his tie, still laughing. Gingerly he stooped beside the water and splashed his face, rubbing his cheeks vigorously, then dipped his comb in the water and tidied his hair. He even tried to whistle, but found that he couldn't quite keep his lips rounded. As a boy he had had to work and had little opportunity to learn the things the regular fellows did. In moments of discouragement he felt that this had left him colorless. No matter, he thought, striking off down the beach jauntily, yawning and smiling. With a shave and vigorous tooth-brushing he would be a new man. Another thought came to him, pleasing him with his ingenuity. Why couldn't he rinse his teeth in the salt water? Finding a rock which enabled him to reach deeper water without wetting his shoes, he bent over and dipped both

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plates, shaking them in the water until, unfortunately, they slipped out of his fingers and he watched them circling down out of sight.

In the distance he could see a bath or boat house, and he set off in that direction, his joy in the morning increasing as he noticed what appeared to be an antenna on the building. One of the doors was marked MEN, but Everett had very little interest in men at that moment and so chose the other, marked WOMEN.

There were certainly a lot of them, more than a man could ask for, all oriental, all pregnant, all nude. The bartender was also nude, standing in the corner, his arms folded on his chest, looking at the ceiling in spite of the fact that the old man, the crooner, also nude, was on his knees before him doing something to him which Everett would not choose to mention. Everett, who had always been a good mixer, sat on a vacant commode and began chatting amiably with the young lady on his left. He told her that he felt he could face the wave of the future, which was the general subject of conversation, with equanimity.

She felt that she thought the wave was on the way and graphically patted her belly and those of several of her neighbors.

He thought that he felt that he sensed whole new markets opening up.

She felt that he felt that she could not understand what he thought he felt, and pouted.

Well, he felt that much was to be gained by feeling one another out on the subject.

Feeling radiantly interracial and toothless, Everett made his excuses, flushed, and moved on down the line. He wished to tell someone about his contacts in Washington, which should be useful, and chose for the purpose a mature-looking woman, reclining, looking rather like a sock in which someone had left a darning egg, and—a point of common ground—as toothless as himself.

"My contacts in Washington," he began casually, mouthing his whisper, "are daily in the news."

She cackled and spit betel juice.

"They counsel moderation," Everett said, stretching out beside her.

She masticated meditatively, her old eyes brown and crazed as agates.

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"Gradualism," he whispered, like a dirty word, in her ear. "But they are privately *with* the wave. They do not speak of marriage. They favor penetration." Now, trying to ignore the betel odor, he snuggled closer, throwing a leg over hers and feeling the hard round belly through his suit coat, watching the withered old mouth working like a squid. "So do I," he whispered wetly, acknowledging to himself, even as he said it, that he would say anything to achieve his ends when he was in one of his rakish moods.

In a few moments Everett was interrupted by a sharp report and looked up to see the bartender, a smoking rifle between his legs, standing over the body of the old man, whose open mouth was streaming milk.

Clearly the revolt was underway and Everett's policy did not cover natural disasters or rebellion. "Fire when ready," the bartender was shouting and all around the room the women gave birth with thunderous explosions, like cannon, bearing not children but men, bare to the waist, in black berets, armed, with bayonets fixed. The process interested Everett intensely. Thrown off the old lady, he watched her lift the lower part of her body off the floor, arching her back until, in the firing position of a howitzer, she let go, her son landing like a ballet dancer momentarily off-balance some ten feet away, waving his rifle and running to take his place in the rapidly forming ranks.

Since Everett was aware that in spite of his contacts, or because of them, he would be the first target, he pulled himself across the floor on his stomach, writhing past the subsiding mothers toward the door. Outside the sky had darkened and a steady rain beat on the metal roof of the building, gusting onto the porch. Everett turned up his collar and waited disconsolately for a taxi, realizing how little chance there was at the rush hour in the rain. He turned gloomily to the door marked MEN and entered a carpeted club room where men of his own sort dozed on leather overstuffed chairs before the television screen. During the commercial he could get himself attended to at the bar.

There was a proper colored bartender in a starched white straitjacket who could cleverly pour drinks by gripping the neck of the bottle between his flashing white teeth. Solicitous attendants brushed Everett's clothing, sprinkled his neck with talcum, sprayed his ankles

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with repellant, fitted his mouth with new solid gold plates, combed him, shaved him, manicured him head to toe, and one sweet blonde whisked Tum crumbs from his trouser cuffs. Soon, with a tall, cool drink (in a long stem rose vase), and a napkin laden with hors d'oeuvres (underdeveloped testes on toothpicks, imported), he found himself settling finally to the news.

Actually it was not so much a television set as a hole in the wall, which limited it to local reception—a view of the room he had just left. From here, however, and refreshed by good service, Everett could get perspective. He could not only see events but ponder their significance.

The Visigoths were descending on Rome in furs. Arms were disappearing into the jungle. The Pope, during his visit to Disneyland, issued a Bull on brotherhood. The fad for setting off volcanoes was spreading from campus to campus. A much discussed actress in dark glasses, and nothing else, was seen stepping off a plane 30,000 feet above Mexico City, where she was rumored to be meeting her much discussed ex-fiance's ex-husband and gangland friends for a divorce. Cuba had gone cannibalistic. The market was Bear. The President, speaking at the opening of the first midget nudist colony in the Free World (following Russia's by only months), predicted that there would be room for midgets and other underdeveloped nations in outer space. And behind the scenes one could detect the repeated salvoes of the population explosion.

Everett snapped off the knob irritably, tossed it aside, mixed himself another drink and went upstairs to bed. The news invariably unsettled him. The same stories day after day, and why didn't the world wake up? He slammed the bedroom door so that Socialism would not creep in.

Socialism, the cat, purred sociably on the bed while Everett removed his shoes and teeth. It would be hours before his wife came in. He lay back wearily and reviewed, as was his custom, the events of the day, from Right to Left, seeing them all occur backwards: soldiers enveloped again by their mothers, teeth circling upwards out of darkness, the booth flying up to its perch on the rocks, a backwards run up the staircase, gulls vomiting peeled shrimp gracefully in midair, the egg gathering itself from the Sal Hepatica into its shell. He did not like to sleep before he had put things back in place and had commented on important events of the day to his wife.

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"The packaging of Tums is inferior," he told her amiably.

She, drunk and mussed, lips bruised, had just come in from her Ladies' Aid.

"Men who pronounce *tradition* with an *s* are *queer,*" he said, with a little wave of his hand.

"You were late getting home," she told him.

"Don't I know it."

"I'm giving up for Lent," she said decisively. "Last Lent it gave me the backache."

Everett smiled mistily, poignantly. "We are getting old," he said.

"The price of Sal Hepatica these days is highjacking."

"They don't even give you towels. They don't even have washrooms."

"You can get out through the lid."

"You're telling *me*?"

"The radio has gone out and there isn't a repairman in the city you can trust."

"Well, we mustn't get emotional about it."

"No," he said, yawning. "We must face it with common sense."

And he did.

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POEMS

BLOW, WEST WIND

I know, I know—though the evidence
Is lost, and the last who might speak are dead.
Blow, west wind, blow, for the evidence, O,

Is lost, and wind shakes the cedar, and O,
I know how the kestrel hung over Wyoming,
Breast reddened in sunset, and O, the cedar

Shakes, and I know how cold
Was the sweat on my father's mouth, dead.
Blow, west wind, blow, shake the cedar, I know

How once I, a boy, crouching at creekside,
Watched, in the sunlight, a handful of water
Drip, drip, from my hand. The drops—they were bright!

But you believe nothing, the evidence lost.

Robert Penn Warren

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A FRAGMENT

The trees breathe in like show dogs, stiffening
Under the silver leashes of light rain
To spines. A cyclone fence that guards the moire
Embankment of the shrunken reservoir
Bristles with rain barbs, each a milk tooth, sting
Of stings, where fall began. The park's a stain,
The black paths shimmer under celophane.

It is so real. Shy ghosts of taxis sniff
And worry in the empty park streets, lost
And misted lights, and down Fifth Avenue:
The flags soak at half-staff, bloodshed and blue;
Bloodletting stripes repeating their mute riff;
Gray stars, wet Union sky of stars, crisscrossed
With petrifying folds and sparks of frost.

The rain points prick the lake and touch the drought,
The dusk blue of a sterile needletip . . .
The brightness and the light has been struck down.

IN LABOR, DREAMING

The soft street canyon was silent. In silence the new snow
Layered a rolling swell. The greatest evening
Tilted and rose against the tiny window:
Like her juggled soaking fishbowl swinging
A wave that burst into suds. A feeler of ice,
See-through and frail, scaled the whitening lace
Of the window-guard, now more visible,
As if a vine were growing its own trellis.
The warm room watched it whiten, counting the minutes.

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Think fast! (Still dreaming . . .?) The boy had caught his friend
Flush with a lobbed cannonball of snow.
But then they crossed the closed street hand in hand.
Their dog sprinted in zigzags like a minnow,
Or wallowing in too deep, leapt out like a deer,
Folded forepaws leaping, then his rear . . .
From two floors up, two floors below is deep . . .
They don't know it, but sometime someone will come
And take her hand and feed her to the moon.

THE SHRINE

So now you've fettered that sweet bride,
The boy you've toyed with a while and gelded,
And still not *come*, wretched sod!
Suck yourself off, like in your dream!

Innocents, white and fresh, bless them,
They belonged down in your love grotto;
They hiccup and honk on the slick flags
Looped with turds and the squashed-flat intestine.

Nothing helps, Marquis! Oh try
The scaffold again, with your bald pregnant nun;
The hired child caresses her ripped breasts;
She fingers herself, and releases the pretend-drop—

Nothing helps! At least, at least—
Sade save our republican Mistress, France!
Kiss the Courrèges boot, de Sade,
The stockingful up to the stocking top.

Beyond you lies the shrine, between
The slopes of Zion, past the alehouse.
Refresh yourself, drink deep. The brine!
The salt and gall, your honey and wine!

Frederick Seidel

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EZRA POUND

O voice that came to me
echo of voice that also is vault
vault that is air and space
space that is bloom
Voice I have longed for
how did you ever snuggle yourself out
of the fenced-in rooms
where they keep you a prisoner
and how is your way so free!

Has not the sentence set its mark on you
are you so landless?
Truly
you give me once more the courage to be that with you

FABLE

With the crazy ones we will always find a way
said the Butcher
but how will we manage with the much too skinny?
I was thinking, said the Schoolteacher, primarily
about the enormous-headed
And the more-than-ambitious, said the Stevedore
where shall I stow them?
The irrelevant ones give me the most headaches
broke in the Attorney
Let us instead pass on to the next item on the agenda
proposed the Carpenter
And so they did

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[POEM]

So strange to me
this rose, burst into sweetness
this absent thoughtfulness
or the light over an averted cheek . . .
Like a day in spring
when one divines something and holds it fast
for a moment, a second
unalterable
something which never will be summer

(CHINESE EMBROIDERY)

A firebird's nest is the heart
woven with branches of veins
and lined with flames. But the bird
broods there in still higher
heat. From her breast and sides
the flames seem to withdraw. Unscathed
she rests over the invisible egg
with her wings fanning, her tail-feathers
hanging outside the nest-rim. Or she flutters
up for a moment as if to catch
the insect of thought and images, vanishing
in the air's silk as soon as she has risen
again visible when again she rests
in flame, smoothing her feathers with her beak

Gunnar Ekelof

(*Translated from the Swedish by Leif Sjoberg and Muriel Rukeyser*)

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AN OPEN LETTER

Dear Premier Kosygin,

We, who regard ourselves as members of an international community of letters and deny the right of our own government to restrict our artistic and intellectual freedom, deplore the conviction of Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel and are shocked by the severity of their sentences. We urge you to commute the sentences of Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel and to permit them to pursue their profession as writers.

Daniel Aaron
Lionel Abel
Henry D. Aiken
William Alfred
Jacques Barzun
Eric Bentley
John Berryman
Marius Bewley
John Malcolm Brinnin
Robert Brustein
Jules Chametzky
Eleanor Clark
Marshall Cohen
Lewis Coser
James Dickey
Martin Duberman
F. W. Dupee
George P. Elliott
Richard Ellmann
Victor Erlich
Donald Fanger
Jules Feiffer
Leslie A. Fiedler
Louis Fischer
R. W. Flint
Joseph Frank
Bruce Jay Friedman
Sanford Friedman
Erich Fromm
Norman Fruchter
Eugene D. Genovese
Allen Ginsberg
Paul Goodman
Adolph Gottlieb
Michael Hamburger
Stuart Hampshire
Oscar Handlin
Elizabeth Hardwick
Michael Harrington
Tom Hayden
Hiram Haydn
Anthony Hecht
Joseph Heller
Lillian Hellman
Nat Hentoff
John Hersey
Richard Hofstadter
John Hollander
Sidney Hook
Richard Howard
Irving Howe
H. Stuart Hughes
Charles Jackson
Paul Jacobs
Jasper Johns
Stanley Kauffmann
Walter Kaufmann
Alfred Kazin
Louis Kronenberger
Stanley Kunitz
Jeremy Larner
Roy Lichtenstein
Robert Lowell
Jack Ludwig
Staughton Lynd
Kenneth S. Lynn
Robie Macauley
Dwight Macdonald
Norman Mailer

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Bernard Malamud
Steven Marcus
Herbert Marcuse
Patricia Marx
Rufus Mathewson
William Meredith
Robert Merton
Marianne C. Moore
Frederick Morgan
Hans Morgenthau
Wright Morris
Robert Motherwell
Howard Nemerov
Barnett Newman
William Phillips
Merlyn S. Pitzele
Norman Podhoretz
Richard Poirier
Thomas Pynchon
Philip Rahv
John Henry Raleigh
Ad Reinhardt
David Riesman
Larry Rivers
Harold Rosenberg
Mark Rothko
Richard H. Rovere
Meyer Schapiro
Richard Schlatter
Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.
Mark Schorer
Frederick Seidel
Karl J. Shapiro
Susan Sontag
Muriel Spark
Stephen Spender
Theodoros Stamos
Leo Steinberg
Richard Stern
I. F. Stone
William Styron
Wylie Sypher
Allen Tate
Harold Taylor
William Taylor
John Updike
Andy Warhol
Alan Westin
Reed Whittemore
Jerome Bert Wiesner
Richard Wilbur

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Max Hayward

THE MOSCOW TRIAL

The Defendants

Both are aged about forty, both are married with children, both are veterans of World War II. Andrei Donatyevich Sinyavsky is a Russian; Yuli Markovich Daniel is a Jew—probably the son of the Yiddish short-story writer Mark Daniel-Meerovich, who died in 1940.

Sinyavsky has a considerable public reputation in Moscow intellectual circles as a teacher, scholar and critic. He is a person of unusually wide literary culture with a special interest in the history of art. His hobby is traveling in the north of Russia to look at the old wooden churches there. His major work is a book on the poetry of the early revolutionary years. The French scholar Michel Aucouturier reports (*Tribune de Genève,* February 8, 1966) that Sinyavsky once told him that, for him, "destalinization" meant above all a return to the creative vigor unleashed by the Revolution. In his first work published abroad under the pseudonym Abram Tertz he wrote: "The image of the Revolution is as sacred, both to those who took part in it and to those who were born after it, as the image of a dead mother." His views are certainly nonconformist, but there is nothing in his published work to suggest that he is anti-Soviet or "counter-revolutionary" in any reasonable definition of these terms. He is not a Marxist and, in his final plea at the trial, he said that he wrote from an "idealist" (in the philosophical sense) point of view. Nonacceptance of Marxism or materialism is not a crime in the Soviet Union. Belief in Marxism, or lip service to it, is incumbant on Party members, and is urged in other citizens, but that is all. In his general philosophy Sinyavsky is close to Pasternak and in his

Note: This article is based on a lecture given at the State University of New York, Stoneybrook, L.I. It was written before I had seen the transcript of the trial, published in the *N. Y. Times Magazine,* April 17, 1966.

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introduction to Pasternak's collected verse, which appeared shortly before his arrest, he shows his sympathy for the Pasternakian scale of values. He never concealed his attachment to these values, and it was symbolized by the fact that he was one of pallbearers at Pasternak's funeral. There could have been no clearer public confession of faith.

In his fiction and essays published abroad—*On Socialist Realism, The Trial Begins, Fantastic Tales, The Makepeace Experiment, Unguarded Thoughts* and *Pkhents*—he takes a stage further some of the ideas implicit in the work published under his real name in the Soviet Union. He had demonstrated his interest in modern art in a study of Picasso (published in Moscow in collaboration with L. Golomoshtok—perhaps the son of a Yiddish writer of this name—who, according to some reports, is now under arrest for having refused to testify against Sinyavsky at the trial) and much of his fiction is a conscious application of the surrealist technique to literature. Certainly there is much in his work which would shock the susceptibilities of "right-minded" Soviet citizens. He says "bloody" on the stage, and he pokes fun at such august institutions as the police. But there is nothing seditious in any reasonably defined legal sense.

Daniel—until his trial—was scarcely known in the Soviet Union, where he had published nothing except occasional verse translations. Under the pseudonym Nikolai Arzhak he published abroad four stories: *This is Moscow Speaking, The Hands, The Man from Minap* and *Atonement*. Only the first of these has so far appeared in English. It is a fantasy rather on the lines of the Italian film *The Tenth Victim,* though the scene is set in the Soviet Union instead of in Western Europe and America. Arzhak writes in a somber vein and his satire has a bitterness which is absent from the writing of the more serenely good-humored Tertz. *Hands* is a particularly gruesome tale about an old *chekist,* and *Atonement* is the harrowing story of a man who goes mad because he is wrongly suspected of having denounced people to the police under Stalin.

Prelude to the Trial

The two men were arrested on September 13, 1965. Rumors of the arrests began to reach the West at the beginning of October, and Vigorelli, the Secretary-General of the European Community of Writers, first raised the question in public, in the presence of Soviet delegates, at a meeting of the organization in Rome on October 9. For the next two months, numerous anxious inquiries, both public and private, from leading Western writers and organizations were addressed to Kosygin,

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Surkov (Secretary of the Union of Soviet Writers) and others. They were met by silence. Only on November 22 did Surkov admit the arrests at a press conference in Paris, at the same time giving a solemn assurance that "socialist legality" would be observed.

The Soviet public had to wait another two months before they were first officially apprised of the arrest of Sinyavsky and Daniel. On January 13, 1966, *Izvestia* published an article about the case by Dmitri Eremin, a little-known writer who had won the Stalin Prize in 1952. Entitled "The Turncoats," this article set the tone for the pre-trial campaign, and for the trial itself. To call it prejudicial would be an understatement. Eremin expressed regret that certain (unnamed) Western intellectuals should have protested the arrest of Sinyavsky and Daniel, who were double-faced agents of Western anti-Soviet propaganda. Behind a facade of legitimate open activity, he said, they had hidden "hatred for our system, vile mockery of everything dear to our Motherland and people." This amounts to an accusation of sacrilege. "Double-dealing" or "two-facedness" is not covered by the Soviet criminal code. There is no specific ban on the use of pseudonyms, publishing abroad, writing one thing under one name and something else under another.

Sacrilege, however, can be accommodated in a pinch under Article 70 of the Criminal Code:

> Agitation or propaganda carried out with the purpose of subverting or weakening the Soviet regime or in order to commit particularly dangerous crimes against the state, the dissemination with a similar purpose of slanderous inventions denigrating the Soviet state and social system, also the dissemination, production or harboring for the said purposes of literature of similar content, is punished by imprisonment for a period of from six months to seven years, with or without exile for a further period of two to five years.

Clearly, everything hinges here on proof of *intent*. Eremin, and subsequently the prosecution at the trial, based the case against Sinyavsky and Daniel on the allegation that their work was consciously intended to subvert and weaken the Soviet system. In other words, their literary work had to be equated with seditious leaflets or proclamations, even though it was not available to the Soviet public, not distributed inside the country, and could hence scarcely be shown to subvert an audience it did not reach. To prove that the defendants' work was sacriligious in content and seditious in intent, Eremin and the prosecution quoted certain passages out of context.

"The first thing you feel in reading their works," wrote Eremin,

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> is disgust. It is revolting to quote the vulgar things with which the pages of their works abound. With morbid prurience, both of them delve into sexual and psychopathological "problems." Both of them present a picture of total moral degradation. Here is a typical example from the work of Daniel-Arzhak: "You see women walking about the streets, looking like eunuchs—waddling like pregnant dachshunds or as scrawny as ostriches, with swollen bodies, varicose veins, wadded breasts or tight stays hidden under their clothes."

One would search the works of Daniel-Arzhak in vain for this passage, since it actually appears in *The Trial Begins* by Sinyavsky-Tertz. And Eremin does not so much as hint at the context: the vixenish heroine of the story is examining herself in front of the mirror and mentally comparing herself with other women of her age.

Eremin goes on:

> They like nothing in our country, nothing is holy for them either in its present or in its past. They wish to slander and curse everything that is dear to Soviet man. This is what they write about Anton Pavlovich Chekhov: "The classical writers—it's them I hate most. . . . That Chekhov ought to be taken by his wretched tubercular beard and have his nose stuck in his consumptive spittle which has unfortunately now dried up."

This is quoted from Tertz's *Fantastic Tales* and is part of the ravings of a semi-demented graphomaniac who is jealous of the classics.

Sinyavsky is further alleged to have slandered the Soviet army, but there are no quotations to back up this particular contention. Finally, and *horribile dictu,* there are things about Lenin which are so terrible that Eremin cannot possibly reproduce them. The most "terrible" things about Lenin I have been able to find are a passage in *On Socialist Realism* in which Tertz says that it is impossible to replace the cult of Stalin with a cult of Lenin because "Lenin is too much like an ordinary man and his image is too realistic: small, bald, dressed in civilian clothes," and a reference in *The Makepeace Experiment,* not in the least bit unkindly to Lenin, to the widely-held belief that in the last days of his life "he bayed at the moon, our Ilyich, knowing that he was soon to die."

With all these out-of-context quotations, Eremin makes at best only a case for moral delinquency, which is not covered by Soviet criminal law. To make a case for criminal delinquency, Eremin asserts that Sinyavsky and Daniel, by their works, have engaged in psychological warfare against the Soviet Union, helping those who stir up the flames of international tension. They are not just morally depraved, but

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agents of international imperialism, to whom, he says—anticipating the court's findings—"no leniency can be shown."

Eremin's article—if that had been its intention—did nothing to allay disquiet in the West. It seemed almost incredible that the Soviet authorities would proceed to the trial of a case which had now been so hopelessly prejudiced. There were indeed signs of hesitation in the face of mounting protest. *Pravda,* the Party newspaper, said nothing. *Izvestia* tried to run a follow-up campaign of "massive indignation" in response to Eremin's article. But it could produce only three or four rather unconvincing expressions of outrage from an ill-assorted collection of "average citizens." The classical orchestration was lacking.

On January 22, the *Literary Gazette* produced a slightly more sophisticated, but none the less prejudicial, attack on the two writers by a virtually unknown critic, Zoya Kedrina (who was also to figure at the trial as a so-called public accuser, i.e., a kind of "expert" witness for the prosecution). She also produces lots of out-of-context quotations, and makes great play with one passage from Daniel-Arzhak which *could* be construed as a call for terrorism. In *This is Moscow Speaking,* there is an ambiguous passage in which the hero, who is on the whole against murder and violence, toys in his imagination with the idea of assassinating the Soviet leaders. This evokes a memory of the war, of people being blown to pieces by grenades, crushed by tanks, etc. It is not clear whether the author rejects the idea of terror because of this sudden memory, or not. Kedrina does not give the author the benefit of the doubt, and interprets this passage as a clear call for terrorism against the Soviet regime, calling Daniel-Arzhak a fascist who advocates a "program of bloody wars and putches, a program of liberation from communism by terror."

Nobody at any stage either before or during the trial was able to produce any passage from the writings of Sinyavsky-Tertz which, even torn out of context, could be interpreted as anything as serious as a call for the assassination of public figures, or for the use of violence in any form. In many countries a call for terror, even in literary form, would be regarded as seditious and might legitimately give cause for legal proceedings. Now, here we have a very odd contradiction. Without arguing the merits of Kedrina's interpretation of the passage in Arzhak, let us suppose for a moment that a case could be made of the kind which cannot, for lack of evidence, be made about the works of Tertz. Let us suppose for the sake of argument that one of the two writers has written something which is indeed seditious in that it calls for the violent overthrow of the present Soviet system and the assassination of its leaders. If the prosecution had believed this to be so, and if they accepted

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Madame Kedrina's interpretation of the passage in question, why did the prosecution not demand the maximum sentence for Arzhak? In fact it was the other way around. The maximum sentence of seven years was demanded and given to Tertz, in whose work there is no element, discoverable by Kedrina or anybody else, of sedition in the legal sense. Arzhak received a lesser sentence of five years.

The rest of Kedrina's article is concerned not with proving moral or criminal delinquency (except for a new charge of anti-Semitism against Tertz—this is backed up by attributing to the author the anti-Semitic remarks he put into the mouths of anti-Semitic characters), but with demonstrating that the two authors are no good anyway. Their work is described as primitive and boring, and Sinyavsky in particular is dismissed as a fourth-rate hack whose work is heavily influenced by certain pre-revolutionary pornographers. He has also allegedly plagiarized Kafka, Saltykov and Sollogub. We need not bother to take issue with Madame Kedrina on the literary merit of Tertz, but it should be noted that she attacks him in a way which is clearly calculated to alienate the sympathies of Soviet writers who know Sinyavsky as a critic of distinction. The language of her attack is offensive and she describes both writers as heirs of Smerdyakov, one of the vilest creations in all of Russian literature.

The Trial

The trial opened on February 10, 1966, and went on for four days. There were several unusual features about it and in one respect it was unprecedented—it was the first time in the history of the Soviet Union that writers had been put on trial *for what they had written.* Many Soviet writers had been imprisoned, banished, executed or driven to silence, but never after a trial in which the only evidence against them was their literary work. The poet Gumilev was shot for taking part in a revolutionary conspiracy. Boris Pilnyak was publicly denounced for publishing a work abroad in the late twenties, but he was not tried, and when he eventually was arrested and disappeared in 1937 no charges were ever specified. Isaac Babel was arrested in 1939, not apparently for anything he had written—he had written scarcely anything for a number of years—but presumably for nonliterary reasons which were never revealed. Akhmatova and Zoshchenko were denounced in 1946 for writing in an anti-Soviet spirit, but they were never tried or subjected to any administrative sanctions. Boris Pasternak, who published *Dr. Zhivago* abroad as a deliberate act of defiance, was attacked and hounded, and

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called a pig and a renegade, but he was not tried under the article of the Criminal Code under which Sinyavsky and Daniel were charged.

The second unusual feature was a striking difference in the way the case was reported in the government newspaper *Izvestia* and the way it was reported in the Party newspaper *Pravda*. *Izvestia* had its own correspondent, Yuri Feofanov, in the court, who reported day by day, not with the objectivity that one might expect from a court reporter, but as one whose sympathies clearly lay with the prosecution. The pieces are written in the classical style of the Russian satirical *feuilleton,* speak with heavy sarcasm of the accused, quote their words in order to mock them, and in general assume the guilt of the accused before the court had reached its verdict. The two accused are presented as cowardly felons who squirmed under the withering attack and the iron logic of the prosecution. There is no indication from these reports whether or not the defense lawyers cross-examined witnesses. Indeed it appears that there were no witnesses in the ordinary sense. The only witnesses mentioned were people subpoenaed by the prosecution to give evidence against the accused. They were mostly acquaintances of Sinyavsky and Daniel who had known of their work but had failed to denounce them to the authorities. It is impossible to gain any real idea of how the case was actually conducted from these heavily biased reports. If the accused were given a fair trial, the *Izvestia* correspondent made every attempt to obscure the fact.

The reports in *Pravda* were not qualitatively different from those in *Izvestia,* but it was noticeable that *Pravda* devoted much less space to the trial, giving only brief Tass Agency accounts, except on the last day, when it ran a piece from its own correspondent. The Tass reports are less heavily sarcastic than Feofanov's, but they are even less revealing about what actually took place. All we can see is that both the accused based their defense on the argument that literature and propaganda are two different things, and that authors do not necessarily share the sentiments pronounced by his characters. It was rejected out of hand by the prosecution and the presiding judge. As *Pravda* wrote—and this is a good example of the way the trial was reported:

> Those present in the court found it irksome, particularly when the accused were being questioned. To put it bluntly, it was very disagreeable to observe the unsavory game of the two double-dealers. What was the essence of the statements of Sinyavsky and Daniel? Sometimes it was a blank denial of the anti-Soviet essence of their works, sometimes it was nebulous disquisitions about the nature of artistic creation, and sometimes it was a stubborn attempt to disassociate themselves from their

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> heroes. . . . The statements by Sinyavsky and Daniel that the author is not identical with his heroes were irrelevant. The court proved beyond any shadow of doubt that the anti-Soviet utterances of the heroes are in this instance exactly the same as those of the authors.

From the reports it is clear that the prosecution "proved" this assertion by the same method employed before the trial by Eremin and Kedrina, namely by persistently quoting out of context. The Italian newspaper *Il Giorno* published on February 24 what appears to be an authentic, though garbled and shortened, version of Sinyavsky's final plea to the court.[1] (This plea was not published in the Soviet press and he was asked to make it without warning, two days before he expected to. According to the *Il Giorno* text he apologized in advance for the resulting incoherence.) He talks despairingly of how he and his fellow accused were beating their heads against a brick wall in trying to establish the legitimacy, without which literature would be impossible, of an author's creating a wide range of characters with whom he is not necessarily to be identified either in character or sentiment. It was as though Shakespeare were to be identified with Macbeth, or Dostoevsky with his "man from the underground." In *The Trial Begins,* his very unpleasant character, the Public Prosecutor, Globov, who is involved in the anti-Semitic campaign of the last years of Stalin's life, says such things as: "Rabinovich is a scoundrel, like all Jews." This was evidently produced by the prosecution at the trial as irrefutable evidence that Sinyavsky was an anti-Semite himself. A passage at the end of *The Makepeace Experiment* was quoted to prove that he was against mothers. In fact, when read in context, the passage is a moving defense of mothers. In the last chapter of the novel, when the city of Lyubimov has been devastated by its lunatic dictator, it is the old women who come to pray for the souls of the fathers and of the sons, of the living and of the dead. Since they are ancient and wizened they are compared to "old worm-eaten forest mushrooms." In the eyes of the prosecution this image was a slander on mothers and motherhood in general.

The third unusual feature of the trial is that the accused did not plead guilty. This evidently took the prosecution by surprise and may partly explain the very maladroit handling of the trial, and the gingerly way in which it was reported by *Pravda.* According to Tass, the two had admitted their guilt during the preliminary investigation, but they withdrew this confession of guilt in court. Of course this would never

1. Its authenticity is now fully borne out by the full text of the transcript.

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have happened under Stalin, since people were never brought to open trial until the authorities were absolutely certain that there would be no departure from the script prepared in advance. It has been suggested that the plea of *not guilty* on this occasion is evidence of a general improvement in the administration of Soviet justice. One could find better instances to illustrate an improvement in the Soviet judicial system—but this is a special case and proves nothing, except that Sinyavsky and Daniel perhaps hoodwinked their interrogators in order to get as open a trial as possible. This may also be why Sinyavsky got the maximum sentence demanded by the prosecutor (whereas Daniel, during the course of the trial, apparently admitted partial guilt, and hence got a lesser sentence, even though his work was demonstrably—in the eyes of one of the "public accusers," Madame Kedrina—more "anti-Soviet.") Sinyavsky totally denied his guilt in his final speech, and thus broke the usual bargain made during the preliminary interrogation, according to which the defendant will receive a lighter sentence if he facilitates the task of the prosecution by confessing in open court.[2]

The Aftermath

There is no need to describe in detail the foreign reaction to the trial. The following will suffice as an example of comparatively restrained comment:

> The Soviet press attacks on the accused before the trial assumed their guilt. So did the Tass versions of what went on in the court. Since no full and objective version of the proceedings of the trial has appeared, outside opinion cannot form a proper judgment on the proceedings. The court has found the accused guilty, but the full evidence for the prosecution and defence which led the court to this conclusion has not been made public. Justice should not only be done but should be seen to be done. Unfortunately, this cannot be said in the case of this trial.

These words were spoken by the general secretary of the British Communist Party, John Gollan (*Daily Worker,* February 15).

Even Louis Aragon, who has never before in public deviated from his unswerving loyalty to Moscow, could not contain himself, and after a consultation with the head of the French Communist Party, Waldeck-Rochet, issued a statement, which was prominently printed in *Humanité,*

2. I must emphasize that this is no reflection on Daniel, only on the conduct of the case. Daniel stood by Sinyavsky throughout, and in regretting that he had sent his work abroad, he was not seeking more favorable treatment for himself.

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condemning the conduct of trial. PEN expressed "shock and horror." The Swedish Nobel Prize committee sent a telegram to President Podgorny urging clemency. Rarely has there been such unanimity, cutting across political boundaries, in the expression of international concern at the outcome of a trial.

What of reaction inside the Soviet Union? Official response to foreign criticism has been muted. There has been no direct reference to the protests of foreign communist and left-wing circles, but *Pravda* (February 22) has spoken vaguely of "some progressive figures" in the West having been mislead into thinking that Sinyavsky and Daniel had been tried for their writings, whereas in fact they had been tried for "crimes against the Soviet regime and its Revolution." They were not punished for the "critical spirit" of their writing, but for "slander." *Pravda* was also insistent that the trial had been fair, the proceedings correct and the verdict just: ". . . the careful and objective conduct of the case was a graphic proof of the democratic nature of the Soviet regime. It would be strange if the courts were expected to display a 'liberal approach' to the enemy's ideological scouts who were caught redhanded." The use of the word "ideological" here is interesting. It is tantamount to saying that Sinyavsky and Daniel were tried and sentenced for "ideological" deviation, or, to put it in other terms, for heresy.

Unofficial reaction in the Soviet Union naturally varies, but it appears that even among the sort of members of the establishment who are licensed to consort with foreigners, the reaction is much the same as in foreign Communist circles—one of embarrassment and regret that the matter was handled in this way. The foreign editor of the London *Sunday Times,* Frank Giles, who was in Moscow during Wilson's recent three day visit, reports:

> No one I talked to approved of what the two writers had done—publishing abroad under assumed names—but many of more liberal tendencies regretted the trial and the harsh sentences. It could have been handled so much better, said one middle-aged intellectual, they could have been attacked in the newspapers for their twofacedness and then left to languish in natural disgrace.

This view probably reflects wiser counsels that must have been urged in official circles, among the judiciary and even perhaps among a section of the police, during the five months in which the matter was under preliminary investigation. More liberal officials must have pointed out that the virtually closed trial of the two men, proceeded

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by a campaign of defamation in the press, would antagonize public opinion both at home and abroad, and once more bring Soviet justice into disrepute.

Public opinion inside the Soviet Union has demonstrated its sympathy in the only way open to it—the now traditional way of massive silence, which was employed to show moral support to Pasternak when he was being hounded because of his acceptance of the Nobel Prize. It has been possible to find only three—almost unknown—writers to attack Sinyavsky and Daniel: Eremin and Kedrina, who appeared at the trial as "public accuser," and a certain Arkadi Vasilyev, an almost unknown novelist. (The latter is reported as having said at the trial, to discredit the two men as writers: "How can one describe as works of art concoctions in which there is a preoccupation with murder, sexual perversion and psychological abnormality?") Not one writer of any stature has voiced approval of the sentences. Such negative unanimity is almost unprecedented. Six Uzbek writers sent a telegram, couched in pathetically stereotyped Russian to *Izvestia* (February 23), saying among other things: "We have greeted with satisfaction the news that the traitors have been brought before a people's court and received their deserts." No Russian writer (except, predictably, Sholokhov) has thus far joined his voice to those of the six Uzbeks. There was only a brief and anonymous statement of approval of the sentence, in strikingly hackneyed language, in the form of an open letter to the *Literary Gazette* (February 22) from the "Secretariat of the Board of the Union of Writers." The only signed collective letter the authorities have been able to organize comes not from writers, but from a group of professors and teachers of the philological faculty of Moscow university, where Sinyavsky was once a student.

What is tragic about this trial is not only that the two men have been tried and sentenced for heresy, sacrilege and blasphemy, but that the trend towards an improvement in the administration of justice, the frequently expressed desire to do away with "distortions of justice" as part of Stalin's legacy—all this has received a severe setback. Sinyavsky and Daniel's trial *could* have been a test case to show that "socialist legality" had really been restored, that the earnest debate among Soviet jurists in recent years about the need to see that due legal procedures were observed really counted for something. Once, however, these good intentions were put to the test in a political trial, we find that, just as in Stalin's time, reason of state prevailed over the rule of law. It was decided beforehand that an example had to be made of the two writers, and an example was made—the law was set at nought in a flagrant fashion. This is what

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has shocked—and frightened—the Soviet public. Many of them must have remembered an article which appeared in December, 1964, in *Izvestia*—the same paper that almost a year later was to open the public campaign against Sinyavsky and Daniel with the scurrilous article by Eremin. The earlier article was a long and authoritative article, called "On Socialist Justice," and written by none other than the President of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R., A. Gorkin. It criticized as "throwbacks to the past" continuing instances in which a man's guilt is decided on beforehand: "until the court has had its say, until the court has come to its final decision, a defendant cannot be regarded as guilty and cannot be called a criminal, *however weighty and convincing the evidence against him may be.*" Gorkin goes on to attack the widespread practice of presumption of guilt by the police and the people who conduct the preliminary investigation. In particular he sharply criticized as being in blatant contradiction with the fundamentals of Soviet law, the practice of newspapers prejudicing court cases:

> Sometimes articles appear in the press, in which persons are pronounced guilty before their cases have been heard in court, and the question of their punishment is predetermined. It is possible and necessary to criticize in the press deficiencies in the workings of the courts, but to anticipate the court's verdict and thereby to exercise pressure on it means not to combat mistakes in the administration of justice but to aid and abet them.

Many Russians will also have wondered whether it was necessary once more to discredit before the whole world the operation of Soviet justice in a case involving heresy and sacrilege. There was an item in the Soviet press on the next to last day of the trial which many Russians will have read as an oblique comment on it. Whether by accident or design, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* published prominently in its issue of February 12, on a different page from its report on the closing stages of the Sinyavsky/Daniel trial, an apparently innocuous feature article on a letter written by Pushkin to Nicholas I in 1828. The authenticity of this letter had just been established and, according to *Komsomolskaya Pravda*'s correspondent, it had caused something of a sensation among Pushkin scholars. In 1818 Pushkin had written and distributed anonymously a long poem called *The Gabrieliad*. This is a blasphemous epic in which Lucifer and the archangel Gabriel compete for the favors of the Virgin Mary, with the result that there is some question as to the paternity of Jesus Christ. The "ideology," very strictly guarded, of Russia under the Tsars was *pravoslavie*, the Russian orthodox religion.

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Sinyavsky's impious references to Lenin clearly pale before Pushkin's horrendous innuendos about the son of Him by whose divine will Nicholas I sat on the throne of all the Russias. The poem was published only after the October Revolution, and has since regularly appeared in all Soviet editions of Pushkin's works, despite its clearly "psychopathological" delving into sexual matters (at one point Gabriel sinks his teeth "into that part wherewith the Devil sinned").

In 1828 a Government commission was set up to investigate the authorship of the poem which was widely attributed to Pushkin, who at first denied that he had anything to do with it. Nicholas I then invited Pushkin to communicate with him personally, bypassing the Commission. Pushkin wrote the following letter which was passed to Nicholas:

> On being interrogated by the Government, I did not regard myself bound to admit to a prank as shameful as it was criminal. . . . But now, being asked directly by my Sovereign I hereby state that the *Gabrieliad* was written by me in 1818. I throw myself on the mercy and generosity of my sovereign. Your imperial majesty's humble servant: Alexander Pushkin, 1828.

On a written inquiry from the commission as to how they should proceed and whether they should continue to interrogate Pushkin, Nicholas scribbled this *"characteristic"* (this is the word used by the correspondent of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*) remark: *"I know all about this case and regard it as closed."*

At least somebody in the editorial offices of the London *Daily Worker* saw the point, since this excursion into Russian literary history was published side by side with its Moscow correspondent's report on the verdict in the trial of Sinyavsky and Daniel.

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VARIETY

THE SOFT MACHINE

Sir Leon Bagrit is a British industrialist totally committed to automation. Though his *The Age of Automation*[1] sometimes echoes Blimp, and sounds like an updated vision of a nineteenth-century captain of industry, Bagrit is actually a new kind of Shavian hero, energetic, optimistic, impatient with the clichés and sentimentalities of politicians and social workers. He is Lazarus retrained. Lazarus who has glimpsed the wonders of the world automation could deliver, fretting in the midst of the inadequacies of the unautomated here-and-now. In Sir Leon's new world this old globe is but a massive concatenation of struggling bits and inputs not yet properly programmed. With proper leadership and jaunty courage chaos could be ordered as simply as iron filings arranged to suit a magnet. People would be born where they were needed, and not were they were not; nutrition would be adjusted, education properly fed in, and lo! this small O we're now trapped in would give way to that magnificent universe which knows no scarcity and celebrates its leisure and hears more than the music of the spheres in the soft whir of the working computer's reels.

Sir Leon is no intellectual. No theoretician. His description of the world as it is seems at times uninformed, his vision of the world as it might be quite removed from our psychological realities. His voice is full of the incoherence and disorderliness of men who want a world of doing. He speaks, though, for and to the universe McLuhan describes. The computer is Sir Leon's bobsled, his chariot, his Olympic vehicle. He will win the wreath not for himself but for all mankind. "Get on with it," Lazarus cries out, and draws the new world with a flourish: a harmonium, computers and machines and men and production and linear programming and supply feeding consumption which regulates production which keeps supply exact. And since all this is possible why isn't more of it actual?

1. THE AGE OF AUTOMATION. By Sir Leon Bagrit. New American Library. $0.60.

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> Politics, as we have understood them, are in the process of change, and party politics based on the old clichés are becoming increasingly irrelevant and distasteful to many of the scientists and technologists who now make up such an important and influential section of every society. Such people, by training and temperament, are more likely to be interested in the most practical and rapid ways of getting results than in dogmas and ideologies based on an earlier stage of economic development.

That "earlier stage" takes in both socialism and capitalism. Not just national party politics but the East-West struggle, by implication the Cold War, is, in the light of automation, sheer nonsense. Communism and capitalism, Sir Leon says, are "two rather old-fashioned systems," and simply will not be able to stand up to the revolution automation is bringing with it.

> Under the influence of advancing automation we are beginning to see that the differences between capitalism on the one hand, and communism and socialism on the other, which have been dividing the world and inhibiting thought for so long, are at last beginning to diminish.

Though Sir Leon is admittedly no scholar and, indeed, no economic analyst, it's quite clear what notions he thinks are "inhibiting thought." Can, for instance, a nineteenth-century labor theory of value be protected against the realities of a kind of production which makes mere metaphors out of certain kinds of work and hours? Can the Marxist descriptions of the suffering caused by the violent swings from underproduction to overproduction and the resulting shrink in employment have anything to do with the millisecond and microsecond adjustments of production to consumption? Automation, Sir Leon wants us to know, is a mode, and thus properly apolitical. He quotes with obvious approval a statement by the Russian "economist Strumlin . . . to the Soviet Academy of Science[:] 'if Capitalism can be characterized as a classical period of the mechanization of work, Communism will be seen to bring about a new era of total automation in production.' "

The old capitalist goals and drives and urges are similarly out of date.

> From a battle for possession of wealth, limited by our present capacity to produce, we are moving into an era where we shall be more concerned with the means of exploiting our technical resources, with increasing productivity still further, and then of necessity with the problem of the organization of society for the greatest good.

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The Age of Automation, then, is a kind of technologist's and industrialist's utopia, and, as a utopia, has something to say about the way people will make their livings, something to say about their education, their political organization, their cultural activity, etc. But, unlike most utopias, this one predicts what tomorrow will be, on the basis of what Sir Leon has secret access to today. Much of what he predicts for under-automated Britain has already come to pass in this country and in some of the other advanced automation countries—Western Germany, France, Russia, Sweden.

Automation, unhappily, though trying to struggle free of false attitudinizing, has itself fallen into Quixotic stances quite out of keeping with its emphasis on toughness, facts and freedom from ideology. Automation has a gallery of shadowy villains. It is full of fear that the public does not understand what it is about, that labor will force governments to hem automation in, that politicians will move in to arrest the development unhampered freedom cannot help but bring. Sir Leon is not as paranoid as most American pushers of automation, and not at all vulgar. Yet his little book starts out as though it were an answer to a long misinformed speech against automation. His enemies he characterizes as "Luddites," a cliché tag no pro-automation spokesman can resist. And in his preface to *The Age of Automation* Daniel Bell tells us to think of those who predict economic difficulties for automation as "catastrophists."[2]

What automation as a subject of study so far lacks neither Bagrit nor Bell provides—a good description of not only what automation is and does, but how it could affect certain industries if the techniques available at this moment were put to use. How, for example, does an automation salesmen *sell* his machines and systems? Not, we can be sure, by telling a customer, as Sir Leon tells us, that automation "is not a question of machines replacing men." Not, we can bet, by arguing the McLuhan line about radar and computers being ways of "extending man's faculties by machines so that . . . they become better men, more competent men."

In discussing automation, as in discussing Vietnam, one discovers the Either/Or in its most virulent form. Asking questions about automation is taken as a sign of hostility, and the asker is immediately identified as a Luddite or a catastrophist. The automation non-debate, like the Vietnam one, turns into a non-dialogue: once someone is isolated as a

2. The category is as neutral and as purely descriptive as Dante's "trimmers," say.

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Luddite it's clear nothing could be gained from listening to him. Not treason or disloyalty but naïveté, gullibility, doom-and-gloom labels are attached to the questioner.

So someone like Albert Wohlstetter can take time out from his Cold War gaming long enough to tell us that people questioning the statistics and claims of automation are engaged in "a competition in ominousness." As soon as President Johnson appointed his National Commission on Technology, Automation, and Economic Progress (of which Bell is a member), dozens of articles sprang up in all sorts of places, coincidental and spontaneous as a Presidential press conference. Just as Sir Leon starts his book with the line, "Automation is not a devil, a Frankenstein," so Peter F. Drucker, two months after the Commission was appointed, published a go-go article with a similar title, "Automation Is Not The Villain" (*New York Times Magazine,* January 10, 1965); that same month Charles E. Silberman, just as gung-ho, published in *Fortune* his "The Real News About Automation," which opened with the words, "The effect of automation on employment in the U.S. has been wildly and irresponsibly exaggerated, principally by social scientists"; just one day after Drucker's bit, Irving Lipner, in the daily *Times,* attacked the people who present automation as a "nightmare of millions of permanently unemployed on slag heaps."[3]

What stands in the way of a dialogue for automation is the different moment to which the questioning men address themselves: one side seems to be saying, "see what dislocations *full* automation *could* bring"; the other counters with "see what insignificant dislocations *limited* automation *has* brung." We are not even in possession of a kind of Kahn job which might go *You Automate, We Automate, How Many "Dead" Workers?* Automation has its Carlyles, but not its Matthew Arnolds. Something Chesterton said about the two is relevant to the current debates on automation.

3. Drucker's cliché is "scrap heap." Others use "dump heap," simply "the dump," or any comparable image of waste, disuse, or just slowness. The "truth" which counters always stresses motion, change, dynamic action, churning, adaptability, good games and good places for the good games. A January, 1965, article in *Look,* "Automation We CAN Handle It," tells of a "man-sized sample of guts and brains," Romie G. Sears, Negro, 35, who was "robot-bumped" out of his job at a Lockheed plant, but turned to "studying the hell out of titanium," and ended with a better job at higher pay at another Lockheed plant. The language concluding the article is typical of the anti-"ooze"-and-"slag heap" beat these pieces assume. The American work force "is not a mass of inert, uneducated wage slaves clumping in and out of factory gates to earn last week's groceries. . . . Carmobile and competent, he [the U.S. worker] belongs to an army of talent that strengthens itself on each struggle"—i.e. losing his job, the latest version of the Fortunate Fall.

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> Carlyle professed to be a Jeremiah and even a misanthrope. But he was really a demagogue and, in one sense, a flatterer. . . . He told Englishmen . . . all the things they like to be told they are, all the things that they are not. He told them, indeed, with a dark reproachfulness, that their strengths were lying neglected or inert. Still he reminded them of their strengths; and they liked him. But they did not like Arnold, who placidly reminded them of their weaknesses.

Even the title given the President's Commission on Automation is an indication that this government and this time have no use for bad news; not economic "change," or even a fairly neutral label such as economic "development," sets the Commission's goal: it carries the label "Economic Progress" as its charge, and one would be surprised to find its final report out of keeping with so clear a label.

But if one reads Bagrit's book without its propaganda and sales pitch foremost, if one concentrates on what he is trying to tell the public about the world to come, a clear picture of automation's effect emerges.

He does, for instance, clearly differentiate "limited" from "full" automation, not just for a single industry alone, but for the entire industrial complex. His rapid shift from description to exhortation comes because he thinks people who fear automatons and dehumanization may accept *limited* automation but not the *full* automation which all countries need but which Britain, lagging behind, needs more.

> It is interesting to notice that we will often accept a limited degree of automation—the automatic pilot in an aircraft, for instance—but we are reluctant to see the human buffer—in the shape of the pilot—go completely.

Gently Sir Leon tells us that in the age of supersonic flight the pilot as a flyer of his plane is not only obsolete but dangerous. The pilot must use his instruments and radar, "electronic extension[s] of his faculties," by which "the possibilities have been predigested for him," and thus make the correct choices. Cautiously Sir Leon sneaks in the great distinction automation makes: the pilot now is "safeguarding, not flying." The man involved with a closed-loop oil system whose derrick pumps oil into a pipeline which carries it to where it is processed, and from there to the tanks from which it is sold, and from which figures are fed back to regulate the rate of the derrick's pumping, is also "safeguarding," not *laboring* in the sense we have always understood that word: his function has brought an eerie, lonely word into industrial language: he is called a "witness."

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Having softened us up Sir Leon moves to new ground: most people think of automation as an industrial matter, or, if more, as high-speed calculation important in mathematics, physics, astrophysics, accounting, etc.

> Automation is really an umbrella term for a complex of related systems. It includes, for instance, data processing and the scanning of information with alarm systems. It includes computation for specific purposes, for accountancy, for switching of information, for all kinds of rewarding, for observing, recording and controlling every conceivable kind of activity—industrial, commercial, governmental and social. . . . It is now possible to envisage personal computers, small enough to be taken around in one's car, or even in one's pocket. They could be plugged into a national computer grid, to provide individual enquirers with almost unlimited information.

Thinking of the boon to business, Sir Leon ignores completely the threat to privacy and individual freedom. In this country we are rapidly developing a number index for each individual—social security, bank interest identification, stock dividend identification, student IBM or data processing code numbers—which enter a permanent "bank" of information available to far too many scanners. The development of new miniaturized computers, with a storing capacity of not 10^{10} or 10^{12} but 10^{23}, in bits offers staggering possibilities. Instant census might be a planner's dream, but it is also a civil liberty nightmare. Instant retrieval is a fine vision for a post-book computerized library system, but not for the individual who thinks his privacy a constitutional guarantee. From Bagrit's point of view the loosing of information over the land is a risk or a discomfort one must accept as part of the revolution, because what he anticipates is in effect baroque, total, a unity.

I italicize because what this book establishes is Sir Leon's ultimate vision. He knows his goal—the good society, say. He knows his resources—men and machines. But men have not yet assumed the proper form for easy programming. A multipurpose crash program is obviously in order.

> We must somehow *induce* industrial concerns to adopt these new techniques quickly and intelligently, and we must *make sure* that our universities, our technical colleges and our schools are *mobilized* to *produce* the people with the background, the training and the *inclination* which is necessary to bring this about. We must also *see to it* that the *correct* political decisions are taken to make it easier . . . to realize these aims. . . . We shall have to *produce* men and women who are able to under-

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> stand the significance of the past, who are *in the stream of current ideas,* and who can *make use of them,* and who have the quality of imagination that is capable of *foreseeing and welcoming the future.* . . . The educational authorities, with the full support of the government, should institute *a course of training* which would be specifically aimed at *creating a new breed of administrator.*

Sir Leon wants his "mix" to contain more than science and technology. Humanities must have an important place in that "training," and even the arts. "You cannot have these arts in a state of vigor and health without the participation of a large cultured public," Sir Leon argues:

> . . . And if you create this public by arousing the interests of young people in the arts, the satisfying of these *intuitive desires* would lead to a considerable development in the creative arts themselves. They only flourish when the market is there for them. *It is the duty of government to see that the market is available and well provided with funds.*

This, then, is the utopian vision. Only unhealthy pessimism stands in the way of total realization. The abundant society, the happy society, the new-values society: "given the technical means now at our disposal, we must get rid of the out-of-date concept that only those who work have a right to eat." Sir Leon does not go as far as those who argue for a guaranteed annual income, but he moves toward it by suggesting "those who are the least able to contribute, the young, women who do not want to work in paid productive employment, the aged and the infirm . . . will no longer be forced by economic pressures to remain in the work stream." The class struggle is over; the Protestant ethic is dismissed for all time; "Most of the thought patterns of a hundred years ago are obviously obsolete, but those of twenty or thirty years ago . . . are much less easy to recognize as being totally obsolete." In the automation utopia the obsolete must be phased out, and quickly.

But man is an unstable input: and those who are "trained" are not fixed and error-proof. Once or twice in his happy forward-looking book Sir Leon allows for psychological consequences not in keeping with the up-and-doing urgency of its tone: "the fact that not all workers can accept the kind of responsibility which automation would place upon them should not be passed over"; to safeguard men and the system there must be "careful selection of workers, to prevent nervous fatigue and possible breakdown."

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One thing about automation is clear. It has arrived. Much more than a beachhead has been established. The reserves are pouring in. Automation is the essence of *modern* now, and *modern* in business and industry and education (and in the arts) is *in*. Massive computers would be wasted on small units, so massive computers lead inevitably to massive structures and organizations. A properly programmed computer could just as well handle an entire industry as the individual unit within that industry. And a government handling the Computer of Computers could make the right "mix" out of *all* industries. Not just the tax setup but the computer revolution is killing off small units and enterprises. This too is part of the tide no mere broom can ever sweep back.

Nobody has as yet described the new world accurately. It would take a massive organization working with a massive computer and having access to all the secret data of automating enterprises merely *to describe* what is happening all around us. Movies are being made with computers; psychoanalysis is being carried out with computers; medical diagnoses are being speeded up through use of computers; books are being translated, texts analyzed, parallels dug up by computers. Fallible men program computers which, once programmed, frequently operate as if infallible. The United States, which has upwards of 20,000 computers in action at this moment, will, in just a few years, have at least twice that many, each one with a capacity and a capability far in advance of the very best machines of this moment.

Sir Leon Bagrit is asking us to prepare for the inevitable, but what he prophesies is here already for the opening eye to see.

Jack Ludwig

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CAPOTE'S CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

One can dispose quickly enough of the issue Truman Capote has himself made salient in discussion of his book[1]—*In Cold Blood* is not a novel, as Mr. Capote would have us think; it is "only" a book, a work of journalism of an exceptionally compelling kind. Whatever else it may or may not be, the novel is a literary form in which the writer is free to make any use he wishes of material drawn from real life. It was Mr. Capote's decision to stay wholly with the facts of the Clutter murders; in their presentation he employs various strategies learned in his practice of fiction. This does not mean he has discovered a new fiction form nor—for that matter—a new form of nonfiction. Works of autobiography such as Isak Dinesen's *Out of Africa,* works of history such as Cecil Woodham Smith's *The Reason Why,* works of journalism like James Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* are all at least as close to, or far from, proposing a new nonfiction form as Mr. Capote's *In Cold Blood.*

Indeed, a comparison of Truman Capote's report on the Clutter murders with James Agee's report on the condition of the sharecroppers during the Depression is useful in demonstrating some of the accomplishments, but more of the shortcomings, of *In Cold Blood* even as a work of nonfiction. That Mr. Capote's prose is flaccid, often downright inept, and that his narrative is overmanipulated in order to keep things at a constant high pitch of suspense: these are defects apparent without reference to Agee's uncommon talent. But it is in the difference in their approaches to the journalistic enterprise that comparison makes its sharp —but not simple—point.

Let Us Now Praise Famous Men was conceived not in loyalty to fact but in its author's loyalty to himself as an artist; which is to say, in the interplay between the actuality on which Agee had undertaken

1. IN COLD BLOOD. By Truman Capote. Random House. $5.95.

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to report and his own sensibility. Just as Mr. Capote went West for *The New Yorker,* Agee had gone South on commission from *Fortune* magazine. But Agee's "assignment" had at once yielded in importance (perhaps perversely, but this is of only tangential, chiefly biographical, interest) before the imaginative possibilities of the material which presented itself to him. He comprehended only subjectively the world he had set out to describe—in splendid lyrical bursts, he castigated, and eventually celebrated, himself for being a well-fed man, a middle-class man, a writer (of all improbable human apparitions!) daring to spy upon lives this remote from his own. It turned out that this subjectivity was so intense that it largely dominated the object under investigation; *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* implicates us much more with its author than with the sharecroppers. Its bias also distorted the social actuality on which Agee was supposed to be reporting—surely people are not, as *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* would have it, innocent in proportion as they are miserable and poor, nor can one readily suppose that sharecroppers are the superlative instance of humankind that Agee, in his impulse to self-abasement before suffering, makes them out to be. Nevertheless, by licensing his consciousness to prevail over external fact, Agee was able to create an artistic reality, that of his own felt experience. His book intensified our capacity to feel acutely about something, if not about sharecroppers.

Truman Capote's method is exactly the opposite. It was Mr. Capote's decision to report the Clutter case wholly objectively, in as much as possible of its manifest social and personal complication, and to give us both the Clutter family and their murderers without permitting himself any partisanship to either of the extreme oppositions embodied in the two sets of characters. Now on first glance this seems an acceptable enough intention. But, not too surprisingly, it develops that in his submission to actuality, or factuality, and his abrogation of the artist's right to emphasize or even to suppress or distort reality for his own purposes, Mr. Capote prepared for himself an almost inevitable artistic defeat. The neutrality of his posture announces itself even in his prose, whose indistinctiveness is of a sort with which we are familiar in popular writing, where communication is believed to be impeded rather than created by an author's presence on his page. The social object of Mr. Capote's investigation remains intact. And the dramatic impact of his story is not diminished by the impersonality of his approach. On the contrary, it is reinforced, but this only makes for a sensationalism proportionate to the horror of the actual events which are being described. The overtones of *In Cold Blood*—if, in a book so lacking in literary

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resonance, we can call them that—are those of a socially-well-documented story of crime and detection, not of a work of the imagination.

Still, even as we admit the inadequacy of *In Cold Blood* as a work of literary art, it is hard for us to suppose that this alone would account for the large, odd, often unformulable, reservations which so many different kinds of readers have about it. These seem to me to be reservations of a moral, or "human," more than of an esthetic nature, and they derive, I think, from Mr. Capote's stance as the wholly neutral reporter of facts-from-life which, while themselves so highly charged, are presented to us by a mind which refuses to be adequate to their tortuous meanings or appropriate to their terror. By his unwillingness to be implicated in his story, whether by the way he disposes his emotions between the murderers and their victims or by the way he invests his narrative with the intensity and anxiety proper to an unresolvable moral dilemma, Mr. Capote is employing objectivity as a shield for evasion. This is what is resented.

Certain of Mr. Capote's readers would wish he had thrown his weight to the Smith-Hickock side of the moral equation; these, of course, are the readers who believe that psychopaths and criminals, because they live outside the social order, have a special call on our tenderness. There are other readers who, though immune to the particular appeal of psychopaths and criminals, feel that in his unquestioning acceptance of Kansas farmers, members of 4-H Clubs, even KBI agents, Mr. Capote by strong implication gives his assent to American society in terms long outmoded in serious writing. Still others accuse Mr. Capote of having been seduced by personal acquaintance with Smith and Hickock, of having let himself forget the hideousness of their crime and of portraying them *too* sympathetically. If this diversity of negative response requires some common denominator of disappointment, it must be found in the sense shared in some dim way by virtually all of Mr. Capote's audience of having been unfairly used in being made to take on the burden of personal involvement pridefully put aside by Mr. Capote himself. An unpleasant critical charge leveled against *In Cold Blood* is that it is itself written in cold blood, exploiting tragedy for personal gain. One does not have to concur in this harsh opinion (I do not); one can even recognize that if anyone is misused by Mr. Capote it is not the Clutters or their murderers but we, the public, and still understand what inspires the charge of exploitation and, however imprecisely, warrants it.

And yet Mr. Capote's book has virtues which are perhaps not to be detached from the objectivity of his method. It is full of well-reported social detail: here at least Mr. Capote handsomely takes over what was once, in a less subjective day, an important function of the novelist.

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And his book speaks to us with disquieting force on psychiatry and the law—Mr. Capote may not tell us to what end he delved so deep into the Clutter killings, but he thoroughly impresses upon us the small progress our society has made in solving the legal problems posed by criminals like Smith and Hickock. And certainly *In Cold Blood* has a healthily unsettling effect on some of our easier assumptions about social and human causality.

What—Mr. Capote asks us—are we to do about our psychopathic murderers: kill them; put them in prison; put them in hospitals? Although little approval is now given to capital punishment for any class of criminal, it still exists in the majority of American states. But let us suppose—hopefully—that soon this form of punishment will everywhere be abolished (and the movement for its abolition can only be forwarded by Mr. Capote's harrowing description of a hanging: it took twenty minutes for Hickock to be legally strangled), what then do we do with our Smiths and Hickocks? Obviously they cannot be let free in society. Shall it then be prison or hospitalization? If prison, rehabilitation is hopeless. But so too, in the case of murderers like Smith and Hickock, is psychiatric cure virtually hopeless in our present state of therapeutic knowledge. What distinguishes these cold-blooded killers, Smith, Hickock, the young Andrews who was with them in the death row, from at least some persons who commit crimes of passion is their incapacity to feel remorse for their crimes. Where there is no guilt for a murder, there is nothing to stop further killings—psychiatry as yet knows no way to inculcate the capacity for remorse, of sufficient strength to be counted on as a restraint of action, in someone lacking this human dimension. It may scarcely seem practical to commit incurable criminals to hospitals for the rest of their lives; but this is what we do with incurable noncriminals who cannot live in society, and to make a distinction between the two categories, criminal and noncriminal, could only mean that it is punishment and not protection of others which guides our conduct.

But there are even knottier problems than this which Mr. Capote's book brings out of the professional parish where they usually stay hidden from general view. Not only has the law not discovered a proper disposition of the incurable criminal, it has not yet devised a reliable method for separating out the offender who is susceptible of cure from incurables like Smith and Hickock. The legal sanity of these two men was tested by the M'Naghten Rule which still obtains in most states, not only in Kansas. In accordance with this Rule, which asks but a single question, whether the defendant was able to distinguish right from wrong at the time of the crime, Smith and Hickock were clearly able

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to stand trial for the Clutter murders. True, they had been "driven" to commit these terrible killings by forces beyond their control, and they had none of the emotions appropriate to wrongdoing. Under psychiatric examination they exhibited a wide range of symptoms of severe mental disorder. But there is no doubt that they were intellectually capable of telling right from wrong, and knew they had done wrong in killing the Clutter family; the awareness of wrongdoing may in fact have given added zest to their criminal acts. None of this complicated pathology could of course be introduced into a court which abides by the M'Naghten Rule, or certainly not without clinical evasion or imprecision.

Nor is the Bazelon Rule, which substitutes for the M'Naghten Rule in the District of Columbia, a useful advance on the older test for criminal insanity. According to the Bazelon Rule, a criminal need not stand trial if he can be proved to be mentally ill. But at least one wing of psychiatric opinion holds it as self-evident that the mere commission of a crime is indicative of mental illness. The Bazelon Rule, no less than the M'Naghten Rule, fails adequately to meet the central question of criminal responsibility—to trace, that is, if only for legal purposes, the chain of causality in the life of the individual in order to discover in what sense he can be said to be responsible for the way he is and acts.

By his equal emphasis upon the life stories of Smith and Hickock and of the family they killed, so that it is in the glaring immediate light of the *outcome* of the pathologies of the two murderers that we examine their personal histories, Mr. Capote gives an unusual stringency to the enterprise of socio-psychological understanding. The presence of the Clutters within the same pages as the men who so vagrantly murdered them denies us, or should, recourse to sentimentality; it restrains us, or should, from sliding too smoothly into the grooves prepared for us by our present-day preference for the deterministic view of society. Perry Smith, to be sure, has a life story so casebook as to be a cliché of the environmental explanation of mental disease and crime. So awful were the circumstances of his early life—a brutish incompetent father, a raging alcoholic promiscuous Cherokee mother, a vicious Catholic orphanage, ignorance, poverty, degradation—that the question in our minds is not how did this man come to be as he was but, rather, how did his sister manage to salvage herself, if we can think it salvation, for her life of tortured respectability? But the Hickock story is different; Hickock is not at all the social victim, or at least not in the sense of being a product of gross want, mistreatment and neglect. While he was disadvantaged economically, it was in circumstances which according to old-time fable are supposed to make for the peculiar American heroism of

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success. His parents were industrious, honest, clean-living, loyal and loving. Even after their son had been caught in his crime, they never deserted him. A picture like this controverts our readiest notions about the genesis of the psychopathic criminal—until we look more closely and see that, shamed and anguished though they were by what their son had done, Hickock's parents felt no more actual revulsion (however mitigated by love) from their son's crime than the son did himself. The peculiarly awful nature of the Clutter killings reached them only as an idea—a social idea, so to speak—without an emotional affect appropriate to the act itself. One is led to conclude that well before Hickock had arrived on the family scene, the tragic outcome of his life had already been made emotionally possible for him.

Nor is this the only element in the Smith-Hickock story to upset our too-mechanical psychological assumptions. If the two men were unable to experience guilt for taking human life, this does not mean, as we might expect, that they were simply lacking in conscience, any kind of conscience. What someone else might feel about committing murder, Smith and Hickock would seem to have felt about being physically dirty: washing, shaving, showering, caring for their nails was a major occupation of their nonviolent hours. Even more demanding was their concern with language. For Smith, the more literate of the pair, it constituted a measurable and well-exercised superiority to Hickock that he could correct his friend's errors or infelicities of speech, and offer so many more and better words for communicating the complex life of feeling. Everywhere on his travels, as far as his last jail, Smith took with him lists of "beautiful" and "useful" words, obscure bits of information, poems and literary quotations he had anthologized in substitute for the education he had missed. He thought of himself as someone who might have been, who should have been, an artist, and it was from his sense of himself as an artist that he plumbed the depths of his "sensitivity" and nourished his spirit in self-pity. This was met, on Hickock's side, by a highly ambivalent respect for so gifted a friend, an envious admiration which could not but encourage at least his half of their (concealed) homosexual attachment. If we are to say of Smith and Hickock that they were emotionally incapable of our usual old-established moral valuations, we must in accuracy add that they were not without other valuations of a sort to which we are accustomed to give moral weight.

But it is not alone Smith and Hickock but the Clutters too, who, especially as we are shown them confronting their murderers, reveal a far more complicated personal and social principle than we are in the habit of ascribing to virtuous, substantial, Republican, churchgoing, civicminded citizens of the Middle West. At the head of the family

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stands Mr. Clutter—and was anyone ever more the head of his family, more the whole source and apex of its authority? Certainly there was never such a man of policy, in formulated control of every minute and act of his life, even—or so he would have hoped—of every secret terror. He not only took no stimulants himself, not even tea or coffee, but contracted his employees to total abstinence. He disbursed money only by check, so that every penny could be accounted for to whatever still higher authority might probe his affairs. He permitted himself no rage, even kept a dog that was gun-shy. He was a pillar of his community, himself so fashioned for respect that he could even depend upon it for his "nervous" wife, who, after the birth of each of her children, had wandered always further into sadness and uncertainty. But this pillar of strength was a murderee—or so at least I read the story.

From Mr. Capote's detailed reconstruction of the night of the murders, Mr. Clutter was not only himself unable to meet the aggression directed against him by this invasion of his home, he would seem to have incapacitated his grown son and daughter for any self-defense, even by effective guile. Smith and Hickock were of course armed. But it was an hour between the time they arrived in the Clutter farmhouse and the killings. In this period, which included an interval when the family was locked, untied, in a bathroom and several intervals when the two intruders were separated from each other in different parts of the house, no one screamed, no one fought, no one tried to drop out of the bathroom window to run for help. It was apparently inconceivable to Mr. Clutter, and therefore to his obedient son and daughter, that the two men might do worse than rob them, harm them. Only the poor neurotic Mrs. Clutter was available to this kind of imagination. Her "fantasy" was quickly countered by Mr. Clutter's "realism"—it would, one can suppose, have been a familiar situation as between this husband and wife.

Indeed, for me, by far the most interesting aspect of Mr. Capote's book as an American story lies not in the gratuitous violence of the crime it describes—this is not an American invention, though it is as ready to hand for us as if it were—nor in the dreary circumstances of the lives of Smith and Hickock—of this we already have some knowledge—but in the curiously ambiguous personality of Mr. Clutter. If Mr. Capote is at all a novelist in this book, it is, paradoxically enough, as an accident of his entirely literal reporting of this highly "masculine" character undone by his passivity and by—if you will—his lack of actual identity. One is reluctant (it seems like chic) to draw so exemplary a citizen, a successful teetotaling Republican devout progressive farmer, into the circle of self-alienated Americans. Yet manifestly this was a man without con-

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nection with his inner self, living by forced intention, by conscious design, programmatically, rather than by any happy disposition of natural impulse. His response to anger could not have been more contemporary in its "enlightened" propitiatoriness and in its lack of instinctual manliness. Otherwise, would it not have allowed for something other than the guilt-ridden reaction—if these people less fortunate than himself wanted his money, he must give it to them—which was his only reaction to an invasion of his home? Mr. Clutter was a towering figure in his community. One of the last things said to him on the day of his death was said by a neighbor: "Can't imagine you afraid. No matter what happened, you'd talk your way out of it." This sounds like a compliment to courage. But then one thinks of what is actually implied in the idea that we now can define fearlessness as the ability "to talk your way out of" danger: is there nothing beyond the reach of reasonable persuasion? Certainly Mr. Clutter was a talker—not a conversationalist—and this is an American and contemporary thing to be. But according to most folk wisdom, it is also not a very masculine thing to be; it is not supposed to go along with power, force or any other older principle of manliness. In men who had come to his home "to splatter hair on the walls," Mr. Clutter confronted a spirit which he was unprepared to meet and before which he was fatally disarmed.

Diana Trilling

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JUST A THOUGHT

Like many of the readers of *Partisan,* we live in a community substantially populated by intellectuals. Such communities seethe with debate, dialogue, hypothesis, opinion, and words of innumerable other descriptions. A high percentage of all the talk is in terms of the world of today. The talk we overhear seldom includes any discussion of an informed nature about military philosophy. Until very recently, there was almost no discussion of the crisis in military and political intelligence, which was so obviously everywhere in short supply.

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>
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Leo Bersani

NO EXIT FOR BECKETT

The most interesting fact about Samuel Beckett's novels is that they are, at their best, almost completely unreadable. I say "at their best" not merely because Beckett, in one of his rare theoretical remarks, has insisted that "to be an artist is to fail," but also because he has been developing in his novels more and more effective strategies designed to make us find them unbearable, to disgust us with his "talent" in order to interest us in the destruction of that talent.

In three dialogues with Georges Duthuit on contemporary painters, reprinted in Martin Esslin's collection of critical essays on Beckett for the Prentice-Hall "Twentieth Century Views Series," the ordinarily incommunicative Beckett praises Bram van Velde as the first painter "to submit wholly to the incoercible absence of relation, in the absence of terms, or, if you like, in the presence of unavailable terms," the first whose work is rid "of occasion in every form, ideal as well as material." The "anxiety to express as much as possible, or as truly as possible, or as finely as possible, to the best of one's ability," an anxiety common "among those whom we call great artists," is absent from van Velde's ideally "inexpressive" painting. "Helpless to paint" because there is "nothing to paint and nothing to paint with," van Velde has created "art of a new order." His failure is his success, and what we ordinarily call success is, it would seem, a failure to accept the "insuperable indigence" of art, the irrelevance to it of anything outside of it. No "relation" to anything else, no "terms" to refer to, no "occasion" to investigate and exploit, no meanings to be expressed.

What's left? If you suppress your irritation and try to take these statements seriously (as I will), you will have to conclude, it seems to me, that nothing is left. What Beckett calls his "dream" of an inexpressive, insignificant art is also the dream of an incommunicable art. Since any reference or relation to "living" is considered as a "desertion," it's difficult to imagine what the living would respond to, or simply recognize in this new art. And if there's any connection between Beckett's work and these theoretical remarks, nothing is more mystifying

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than the way his work has been enthusiastically, avidly consumed. Not only that; the consumption has, as the astonishing amount of critical comment shows, been anything but passive.

While I find all Esslin's choices less interesting than pieces by Maurice Blanchot, Frank Kermode and Northrop Frye—which are not included—his collection does have some interesting essays (those, for example, by Hugh Kenner, Ross Chambers and Dieter Wellershoff). It is, however, somewhat disconcerting to read so many admiring, undaunted analyses of a significance for which Beckett implicitly expresses only boredom and disgust in the dialogues with Duthuit. Most surprising of all is the often repeated claim that Beckett is speaking for all of us, hitting dead center in his picture of Modern Man. Esslin, with rather cavalier logic, praises his work as constituting "an exploration, on a hitherto almost unprecedented scale, of the nature of one human being's mode of existence, and thereby into the nature of human existence itself." Kenner ends an amusing, urbane piece on the importance of bicycles in Beckett's writing with a fantastic jump from the pleasures of cycling to the assertion that the trilogy "takes stock of the Enlightenment, and reduces to essential terms the three centuries during which those ambitious processes of which Descartes is the symbol and progenitor . . . accomplished the dehumanization of man." For Günther Anders, the plight of the bums in *Waiting for Godot*—who are "representative of millions of people"—"mirrors our own fate, that of modern mass man." And Ruby Cohn ends her competent book-length study of Beckett's comic devices with the insistently repeated claim that the Beckett hero, "reflecting the absurdity of the Macrocosm in the absurd details of his microcosm, . . . cries out in the frustration of his humanity, which is our own."

Has Beckett, then, failed to fail? Elaborate explications of his work are, unfortunately, not wholly unjustified. He has, first of all, no mean erudition, and a host of deciphering critics has collected numerous allusions to St. Augustine, Dante, Descartes, Geulincx, Malebranche, Berkeley, Wittgenstein, etc., etc. We also have the pleasures of symbol-chasing: in addition to joke names like Hamm, Clov and the town of Shit (which Beckett, who tends to be more demure in his native tongue, has changed to Turdy in the English version of *Molloy*), Godot, alas, suggests God, and Malone and Macmann have been interpreted as Man Alone and Son of Man. Finally, Beckett's characters both insistently and nonchalantly bring up such "meaningful" subjects as Christianity, the limits of reason, language as arbitrary nonsense, and the horrors of sex and the body.

Now there's something very elusive about this aspect of Beckett,

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something I feel as an indefiniteness about the status he would like to give his own attitudes. Or it's perhaps an uncertainty about whether or not he even wants attitudes and ideas; is he willing, or isn't he, to allow encyclopedic knowledge to sound like statements *about* things, like a philosophical stand? At any rate, by his indefiniteness Beckett just manages to avoid the inflated pseudo-significance which his critics admire as "profundity." To call Watt's endless, and endlessly tedious questions about Mr. Knott a satire of logical positivism, or to see in the need Beckett's derelicts have of making an inventory of their possessions a critique of capitalistic proprietary impulses, is to miss the way in which the triviality and flatness of the "satirical" context make the attack itself seem even more of a joke than the object of attack. "Taking stock of the Enlightenment" would require a more imaginative commitment *to* the Enlightenment, some resistance from the things being made fun of. Only then could Lucky's "thinking" exercise in *Godot*, for example, be more than learned horseplay. Not only does his incoherent talk leave perfectly intact the rationality of language; a writer who shows so little dramatic ambivalence in his ideas and attitudes demonstrates nothing more intellectually interesting than his own intellectual mood of assertiveness and indifference.

But this is being too harsh, and, in all fairness to Beckett, I should say that he strikes me as being far less interested in, say, Occasionalist philosophy than in the anus, unadorned and admirably unsublimated. The trouble is, of course, that such an interest is also expressive, not exactly of ideas, but of a certain kind of personality. I know of no writer who has come closer than Beckett in his novels to translating the rhythms of defecation into sentence structure, or to finding a doughy, thick, smirching prose to suggest the monotonous pleasure of a baby playing with its own excrement. And his bums exhibit the traits of an ideally anal character: compulsiveness, sadism and, especially, a profound, unrelieved miserliness with respect not only to their possessions but also to their very being, which they try desperately to prevent from escaping into communicable meanings or dramatic self-projections.

Such an extreme fixation at least saves Beckett the embarrassment of being "representative" of all humanity, but the image of consciousness "at play," purposely attentive to and endlessly brooding about the same things, is, after all, a "desertion" from art to life, a sign of how difficult it is to render expression impossible. This is what Beckett himself humorously refers to, with Duthuit, as his "unenviable situation." The attempt to eliminate "occasion" from art is in itself an occasion, and insofar as this attempt is a process of what Mrs. Cohn has

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called progressive "retrenchment," the process rather than the achievement becomes the subject of Beckett's work. And the dramatic images illustrating the process express, inevitably, not merely artistic but also psychological intention. The unity of personality quite naturally asserts itself, and in its very struggle against "content" Beckett's form is both enriched and impoverished by the obsessive images of ungenerous anality.

The artistic intention to fail is, however, by no means only psychologically expressive, and the personality exposed in Beckett's work is one I find particularly well suited to demonstrate what could be called the logic of failure in imaginative activity. Beckett's bums and the bareness of their lives are metaphors for a kind of stinginess the perception of which is perhaps simply heightened by anality, a temptation to *withhold* born of the superficially antagonistic need to give and invent and create. Beckett's inventive capacity is impressive, and he has given us an astonishing variety of images for his vision of an unbelievably forlorn, crippled, depressed and depressing, poverty-stricken derelict. His comic use of colloquial speech (especially in French), his extraordinary ability to create suspense over the most trivial events or questions imaginable, the humor of his uncompromising sourness and crankiness, and a disarmingly casual but relentless obscenity characterize the very special talent we enjoy in the plays and in *Molloy*. But his fiction is a continuous and finally successful struggle against these gifts, and the progress from the crippled but still mobile Molloy to the bedridden Malone and to Worm, armless, legless, and planted in a jar, maps a movement toward another sort of immobility, toward a wished-for paralysis of the imagination. Beckett's principal technique for undermining the inventiveness he's compelled to display is to stupefy us with mindless talk. And he comes closest to his goal in the second half of *The Unnamable*, where monstrously long sentences, filled with commas separating and isolating and equalizing what seem like maddeningly endless verbal signs or gasps finally reduce the story, the language and the mind of the narrator to an ideally meaningless murmur.

It does, of course, seem a very long way from the heavily populated, diversified and active worlds of Balzac and Dickens to the senseless "plof" and "quaqua" of *The Unnamable* and *How It Is*. Beckett's Worm has, however, been in the apple for quite some time. The following remarks, obviously not meant as even a bare outline of the history of fiction, may help to show that Beckett's predicament, far from being that of Modern Mass Man, is a very *literary* one. A look at some of the shapes fiction has taken suggests that a writer's experience of the power and expressiveness of language may lead him, paradoxically, to

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an intuition of and an interest in a reality which language can't express and from which language in fact isolates him. Novelistic invention could be thought of not exactly as self-expression but rather as self-dispersion, as a loss or waste of energy which writers may alternately refuse or consent to. The novelist's answer to the optimism of Descartes' *Cogito* might be imagined as: "I invent, therefore I am not." A radical doubt, at any rate, about the relation between imaginative language and the self—where am I in the world I'm creating?—seems to me implicit in certain subversions of the credibility and importance of action and character in even the great nineteenth-century "realists."

I'm thinking, for example, of the curious role of political detail in Stendhal. Politics fills the space of his novels, it provides the tension, the drama, the life that keep the stories moving, but it is thought of—by Stendhal and by his heroes—as an interruption of happiness, of a paradise of play (in Mme. de Rênal's garden, in the Farnese tower) about which, however, there is very little to *say*. And Stendhal saves the dream, the goal of his fiction, by his own tireless attention to what destroys the dream but creates the verbal environment in which happiness—essentially non-verbal and unnovelistic—can at least be evoked as that which is missing. This undermining of a highly differentiated and active world goes on in the reduction of novelistic material to greater and greater insignificance in Flaubert. The boring failures of Bouvard and Pécuchet leave nothing but what Proust called the *miroitement monotone* of Flaubert's voice, the substitution of a continuously recognizable voice, as the center of our interest, for a story cluttered with events and personalities. A subversion of personality may also be undertaken by extravagant analysis of personality: the search for motive in the later James and in Proust often makes us feel that a character is being destroyed rather than illuminated or enriched; the person disappears under the pressure of analysis, and density rather unexpectedly leads to absence.

The theoretical interest of Flaubert and of James in greater and greater dramatization, their irritation with novelists who intrude everywhere in their stories, is, then, a rather feeble defense against their own impatience with drama, with the mediation of self in characters and events from which the novelist perhaps both pretends and fears he's absent. With Proust the novel becomes frankly, transparently autobiographical, but in a way that reveals language's endless resources for invention. The aim of *A la Recherche* is self-possession through self-recapitulation, but the processes of memory turn out to be processes of re-creation. Marcel's past appears to be suggested and invented as he writes about it, and in the light of what I've been saying, this should

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help to make clear what I take to be in Beckett an exasperated sense of the confusion between expression and invention. Flaubert, James and Proust are nonrealistic to the extent that they eliminate or at least undermine external occasions which their narratives might refer to and claim to be reporting on. As if to get closer to their real subject, they report more directly on the self, but the report itself becomes a verbal and structural occasion which creates material—that is, a self—out of strictly formal terms and relations. So that, in a sense, in his impatience with the pretense of speaking about anything but the self, the novelist comes up against a new kind of dependence: he's no longer "lost" among the strangers spawned by his dramatic imagination, but he finds himself reduced to the unpredictable roles the *play* of his language will impose on him. Having rid himself of the constraints of probability, the novelist may experience, in his "freer" use of language, a threat to his identity rather than a vehicle for directly expressing it. For inasmuch as his own future is tied up with the future of a language no longer disciplined by the credibility of the experience it describes, the writer discovers, along with new verbal possibilities, the *arbitrariness* of the personalities words create. Language, instead of probing personality, reveals the self's frightening superficiality.

Every expression is an invention: it's perhaps an intuition of this sort that accounts for Beckett's ambivalent attitude toward language as expression. Behind the theoretician's call for an inexpressive, autonomous art, there seems to be a deeper fantasy of literature as nothing more than the passive receptacle for a self entirely independent of literary inventiveness. The Unnamable throws off all the personae—from Murphy to Mahood and Worm—which, he claims, have been foisted on him in the hope that he will confuse himself with them, in order, finally, to express only himself, "to be a little as I always was and never could be." The setting of *The Unnamable* may, we are told at the start, be "the place where one finishes vanishing," and the image of some one who is nothing more than a "big talking ball" (an image which recalls Macmann's dream of being "a great cylinder endowed with the faculties of cognition and volition") expresses the anguished need of the Beckett hero to get rid of all the things "that stick out" from some mysterious core of being—everything from bodily protuberances to fictional characters and anecdotes and, finally, verbal inventiveness itself. The ultimate dream is the impossible one of a language that would neither express nor invent, one whose anonymity would, paradoxically, express a self no longer betrayed by *style*. But Beckett's characters will always be disturbed by the possible distance between their words and "how it really is," for, as Moran remarks,

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all language is "an excess of language" (*"un écart de langage"*); the best they can do is to remain attentive, behind the words, to the silence they are breaking, and hope for "the real silence" in which self-possession can, however, be simply the experience of nothingness.

Maurice Blanchot, himself interested in this silence at the source of literature, has described *The Unnamable* as "the pure approach to the movement from which all books come, to that original point where the work probably loses itself." I've tried to make such an approach seem probable, something which could be discussed not simply as a theory of literature, but with reference to specific novels in the history of fiction. Nonetheless, it does seem to me that the impossibility by which Beckett has been tempted, while it's understandable as a purely literary temptation, reinforces, even sanctifies a certain type of personality which I spoke of earlier as perhaps making him more sensitive to a logic of failure in art. A profound skepticism about the expressive powers of language would seem to have strengthened the fuzzy notion in *Murphy* of a self "improved out of all knowledge," of some inner essence completely divorced from the life of personality in time. Fearful of being identified with the selves his words exuberantly invent, Beckett's hero retreats into an ontological miserliness all the more extraordinary because his voice continues to be heard. The undifferentiated, undissipated, unverbalized self is perhaps the generally ignored goal of literature; it is certainly the end of literature; and it brings us back, I'm afraid, to a much more physical "end," for this spiritual retentiveness and the dualism it implies (whatever I express—whatever "leaves" me—is no longer me) also suggest the sluggish pleasures of a perversely constipated child. But the trouble with sublimations is, of course, that their consequences tend to be more serious than a sore tummy. The fear of losing the self in its roles is—as Beckett must have realized in his study of Proust—a fear of losing the self in time. And the illusion of a self outside of time is a retreat not only from life but also from literature, a retreat, that is, from the uncertain futures to which time and language subject both the self and books. Beckett's extreme attempt to render literature autonomous is an ironic reminder of the ultimate dependence of literature on life, a significantly more brutal reminder than the one provided by novels which disarmingly appeal to a reality outside of themselves in order to enjoy more freely an impressive measure of autonomy.

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Marshall Cohen

THEATER 66

Danton's Death is, almost certainly, the greatest first play ever written. In it Büchner examines the political foundations of private sentiments; he defines the "epic" conditions of "absurdist" attitudes. No classical play is more relevant to the contemporary theatrical situation, and it is obvious enough why Büchner is the only playwright since Shakespeare whom Brecht and Ionesco hold in equal esteem. It is all the more distressing, therefore, that the Lincoln Center's production of *Danton's Death* should be so wrongheaded in its literary assumptions and in its theatrical techniques. Wishing to emphasize the political aspects of the play and to claim it for his Theater of Protest, Blau tampers with the text. While Büchner opens the play in a private drawing room where Danton impresses upon his wife the impossibility of "knowing" another human being, Blau establishes an entirely different tone by staging a pantomime of public entrapment against a set whose vanishing points imply "infinite" space. A similar distortion is achieved by omitting Danton's bitter, apolitical jest on the guillotine. Blau's murky, gratuitous translation is as damaging as his wanton cutting. One of its faults is to blur the distinction between the public rhetoric, often reminiscent of Schiller's, that characterizes the Jacobins, and the coarse, metaphorically daring idiom of Danton. The allusion to Schiller is important. Like Brecht, Büchner wishes to set his own historical materialism against Schiller's transcendental idealism. He opposes his own realistic sense of necessity (Woyzeck pisses in the street) to Schiller's moral cant about freedom (the Doctor proves to Woyzeck that the *musculus constrictor vesicae* is subject to the will). Büchner detests those "so-called Idealist poets who give us nothing more than marionettes with sky-blue noses and affected pathos." It is important to observe, then, that Danton is no Posa, dying for ideals that history will vindicate, no Maria Stuart experiencing the sublime and triumphing in death. A hint of this in the program would have been more to the point than Blau's effort to launch a crusade against President Johnson. Danton's "What is it in us that lies, whores, steals and murders?" is not

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a conundrum whose answer is "The C.I.A." (It is instead Danton's momentary attempt to evade his responsibility for the bloody September Massacres.) Danton's boredom, his longing for death and his sense of the *Fatalismus der Geschichte* are, in any case, very shaky foundations for a program of political action. Blau's tendentiousness is objectionable, but his company is intolerable. The revolution at Lincoln Center is betrayed, and the guillotine is the only solution.

Marat/Sade is a far less distinguished play than *Danton's Death*, to which it is obviously indebted and instructively compared. But the theatrical possibilities of Peter Weiss's play are immense, and Peter Brook and the Royal Shakespeare Company exploit them to startling effect. In a greater society the Royal Shakespeare Company would be in residence at Lincoln Center doing Weiss and Büchner in repertory. Ian Richardson's burning eyes would announce the implacable single-mindedness of Robespierre one night and Marat the next, while Patrick Magee's ear for his own eloquence would betray the source of Danton's, or Sade's, indifference to events. *Marat/Sade* is, unlike *King Lear*, the perfect vehicle for Peter Brook and his company. It exploits precisely those European tendencies the English theater has domesticated in recent years. So that while I do not find the Kott-Brook notion of Shakespeare Our Contemporary, of *Lear* as *Endgame*, either defensible or pleasurable, there can be no doubt that Brook is correct in regarding Weiss as the giddy quintessence of contemporaneity, in seeing *Marat/Sade* as Brecht/Artaud. And yet Brook has been no truer to Weiss's intentions than he was to Shakespeare's.

Brecht meant to serve the interest of Marat, of the revolution. Artaud, like Sade, would shock the individual into passionate states of consciousness. Brecht's theater is, by ambition, a theater of dialectical reason, Artaud's one of physical images and sensations. Peter Weiss, intent on bringing them together, stages a Brechtian debate on revolution in the Artaudian setting of an asylum bathhall. He makes the brilliant assumption that the debate between Marat and Sade takes place in one of the plays actually written by Sade and performed under his direction at Charenton. In Weiss's play the performance is witnessed by Coulmier, the timeserving, "progressive" director of the asylum, and the audience in the Martin Beck theater deputizes for the fashionable, thrill-seeking Parisian audience that came to witness the inmates at their "therapeutic" exercises. Each patient is locked deep within his own madness, yet he must struggle, often with heartbreaking effort, to represent a character in Sade's play-within-the-play. At moments the patients are "alienated" Brechtian actors merely "showing" the characters in Sade's play; at other moments they identify with their

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roles in a lunatic consummation of Stanislavskian acting. These panting, rioting madmen, exhibiting freshly spilt blood, celebrating the festival of the guillotine, performing mimes of copulation and whipping the Marquis de Sade, create a shocking and beautiful mise-en-scène inspired by Artaud's conception of an anti-literary theater of the senses.

Artaud's conception of the theater does not, however, exhaust Weiss's. He attempts to give the theatrical spectacle a dramatic and intellectual focus by staging a "conversation" between Marat and Sade. It is here that the play falters. Our knowledge that the Marquis de Sade actually wrote and directed plays at Charenton provides Weiss with two possible advantages. We are inclined to accept the debate in Sade's play as an expression of Sade's own mind, and disinclined to question the propriety of Weiss's staging this debate in an asylum bathhall. In fact, Weiss does not exploit the first advantage, and he fails to consolidate the second. If the debate leans Sade's way this is the result of a miscalculation on Weiss's part and still more, as he has suggested, of the prejudices of the director and his bourgeois audience. Marat is not presented as a dialectical illusion of Sade, and Weiss deliberately rebuts the presumption of historical authenticity. The debate is openly proleptic, its subject less the French than the Russian and the Nazi revolutions. The conflict between Marat and Sade reflects a division in the Germany of Weiss's own mind, and it is intended to be fairly evenly matched.

The "conversation" is not, however, a distinguished one. Its outmoded opposition of private madness and public discipline—Stuart Hampshire places the "conversation" in the thirties and forties—does not engage the contemporary realities of private discipline and public madness. Certainly, it never produces the kind of dialectical excitement that Schiller drew from Posa and Philip, Büchner from Danton and Robespierre or Brecht from Shen Te and Shui Ta. The ineffectiveness of the debate is, however, less serious than its lack of relation to the play's central image. To be sure, Sade staged plays at Charenton. But Weiss must establish some reason for staging his own debate between Marat and Sade in a madhouse. Otherwise one is compelled to regard the inmates of Charenton as a spectacular sideshow or the ideological conflict as an tumorous excrescence. Weiss has failed to make his Artaudian sensations the basis for our Brechtian judgments. The fundamental elements of his play fail to fuse.

Brook has responded to this situation by treating the "mad animals" as the main event and by supposing that words are merely one among other types of sensation. Thus, Sade's main speech, delivered as Corday whips him, must compete with the roar of imitative whistles and groans

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sent up by the inmates. The final lines of the play, spoken by Marat's disciple Roux, and calculated to give Marat a last word, are lost in the general rioting. If the Brechtian substance is diminished (and Brook unquestionably delivers the evening to Sade and Artaud) the essence of Artaud is nevertheless diluted. Sade is not really whipped but untextually caressed with Corday's hair; the guillotinings and dismemberments are only pantomimed; and the spilt blood is merely red, white and blue paint. (Blue for the aristocrats and, of course, a deflationary white for Marat.) The violent effects of the theater of cruelty are "alienated" even as the call to revolution is muted. Brecht and Artaud both deplored what they called "culinary" theater. As served up by Peter Brook, Brecht and Artaud are very much to the taste of M. Coulmier's guests at the Martin Beck.

Peter Shaffer's dramatic ambitions have previously disguised themselves in forms acceptable to Shaftesbury Avenue. In *Five Finger Exercise* he produced an exceptionally effective *pièce noire* by darkening the characters of what looked to be just another drawing-room drama. In *Black Comedy* he managed an ingratiating exercise in visual theater by blowing the drawing-room fuse and requiring the characters to negotiate their way through a trivial comedy of errors in the dark. With *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* Shaffer's theatrical ambitions are openly asserted. He abandons sight-gags for spectacle, and domestic tension for philosophical confrontation. Indeed, his new play is, like *Marat/Sade*, a self-conscious attempt to combine Artaudian mise-en-scène with the drama of ideas. As Peter Weiss acted on Artaud's suggestion that a play of Sade's would serve the purposes of the theater of cruelty, so Peter Shaffer was inspired by Artaud's elaborate scenario for "The Conquest of Mexico." Shaffer choreographs Pizarro's invasion of Atahuallpa's Inca kingdom as Artaud had proposed to stage Cortez' invasion of Montezuma's Mexico. This allows Shaffer to fill his stage "not only with words, but with rites, mimes, masks, and pageants," to pit European arrogance and steel against pagan grace and feathers and, finally, to debate the philosophic merits of each. Unfortunately, the narrative is nothing more than an exceptionally long windup for a very familiar philosophic pitch. One does not care how Pizarro conscripted his army; there is less to "The Mime of the Great Ascent" than meets the eye; and it seems a little late in the day to be scoring complacent liberal points off the two-bit Torquemada who serves as chaplain to the expedition. Finally, the tedious narrative progress turns irrelevant as well. The elaborately prepared conflict of civilizations issues in a Laurentian wrestling match between Pizarro and his plumed serpent, Atahuallpa, and the opulent hunt for gold is seen as a point-

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less prelude to Pizarro's private search for meaning. The absence of Robert Stephens from the generally inferior American production is particularly regrettable. His lithe, radiant performance as Atahuallpa confirmed the impression that he is the most accomplished English actor of his generation. Bernard Levin, the English critic, called *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* "the greatest play of its generation." At best, it leaves open the question whether Peter Shaffer can be expected to take a leading place in that exceptional generation of English playwrights whose emergence is generally dated from the opening of Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*.

Inadmissible Evidence is a splendid recovery from Osborne's tedious, pseudo-Brechtian dramatization of Erikson's *Young Man Luther*. Jimmy Porter is now in early middle age, and the bearing of his homosexuality on his frustrations is still unexamined. One would not have it otherwise. These frustrations give rise to the most dazzling *tirades* now being written for the theater. In *Inadmissible Evidence* they are delivered with supreme effectiveness by Nicol Williamson, an actor of unlimited promise. But it is distressing that Osborne has come no closer to establishing his inevitable personal surrogate in a viable play than he had when he wrote *Look Back in Anger* over a decade ago. In *Inadmissible Evidence* he attempts to disguise the fact that he cannot dramatize a world by pretending that his hero is losing his grip on reality. The first scene is a dream in which Bill Maitland puts himself on trial in the courtroom of his own mind and submits inadmissible evidence to a Kafkaesque court. After the first scene, however, Osborne reverts to his characteristic *verismo* manner, and society, not Maitland, is on trial. Every so often Osborne remembers that these characters are meant to be part-dream, part-real. In fact, they are neither. The female clients are all trying to divorce a man who fits Bill's description. But we do not take them to be dreams just because they are incredible; still less because they are played by the same actress. Conversely, we do not take Maitland's colleagues for real simply because they confirm his prejudices. They are mere shadows cast by his rhetoric, and to disguise this fact by pretending that they are apparitions is no alternative to lending them substance. Osborne is a superb journalist, but he has yet to write a genuinely satisfactory play.

John Whiting, whose play, *The Devils*, was produced in New York this year, considered John Arden and Harold Pinter the most gifted of his younger contemporaries. As this view wins general acceptance, Whiting's first play, *Saint's Day*, rather than Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, will come to be regarded as the seminal event in the development of postwar English drama. The private soldiers who invade Paul

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Southman's town in *Saint's Day* were to be treated with greater thematic lucidity in Arden's remarkable play, *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance*, and the violence unleashed before Paul Southman's birthday celebration was to achieve greater impact in Pinter's *The Birthday Party*. But the decisive steps beyond Terence Rattigan's notions of theatrical craft and T. S. Eliot's of dramatic poetry had been taken, and they help to explain the strength of Whiting's English reputation.

Whiting's controlling themes are self-destruction and responsibility, humanism and terror. In *Saint's Day* Paul Southman, the Swiftian misanthrope with a daughter named Stella, destroys himself when he deprives the literary humanist, Robert Procathren, of his "faith in man." For Southman, himself a great writer, thereby releases the unspoken forces of nihilistic destruction lying beneath the deceptions of humane letters and civilization. (Southman's attack on Procathren recalls Nietzsche's attack on the *Bildungsphilister* David Strauss and it is one of the admirable features of Whiting's play to engage Nietzschean themes without submitting, as his continental contemporaries like Camus did, to Nietzschean formulations.) Southman's self-destructive action provides the occasion for his personal salvation. The day of his death is his birthday and he is delivered from the darkness of hatred on the day that St. Paul is reckoned to have seen the light.

Saint's Day is marred by its contrived symbolism and its echoes of Eliot at his most portentous: "Careful! We are approaching the point of deviation. . . . The moment of the call from another room." While *The Devils* is free of these faults it is deeply flawed by Whiting's inability to adapt Huxley's *The Devils of Loudun* to his thematic purpose. Father Grandier, despairing of man's "fiddledeevinity" and seeking to regain his faith by destroying his self, works this self-destruction over so vast a social terrain that Whiting dissipates his dramatic energies recording it. The theme of self-destruction requires that Whiting establish the force of Grandier's provocations, and yet the Church, the Clergy and the Middle Classes are presented as fatally easy to provoke. Thus, and it would seem unwittingly, he dramatizes society's destructiveness rather than Grandier's self-destructiveness. This emphasis has given rise to the impression that Whiting is writing an English version of *The Crucible*, an impression that is strengthened by the critical event in Grandier's downfall. He is falsely charged with the diabolic possession of Sister Jeanne of the Angels and the nuns of St. Ursula's Convent on the basis of the "hysterical" delusions of the humpbacked prioress (whom Grandier has never even met). Grandier is simply victimized, and there is no relation—as there was in Paul Southman's case—be-

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tween his "point of deviation" and the "call from the other room." Whiting, like his nuns, is given to false pregnancy.

To make matters worse, Grandier's unilluminating lucubrations about the meaning of it all are confided to a sententious sewerman who is certainly the most irritating representative of ordinary humanity to hit New York since George Rose appeared in *A Man For All Seasons.* These insufferable Everymen—George Rose is now appearing as the laconic narrator of *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*—are becoming one of the genuine hazards of contemporary theater-going. Fluid, all-purpose sets are another. The play is a costume drama set in a seventeenth-century provincial town. But there isn't a suggestion of baroque in R. Ter-Arutunian's rhubarb of Brunelleschi arcades, neo-Mayan facades and cantilevered platforms. Michael Cacoyannis' violent and tasteless commitment to the sexual interpretation of the nuns' behavior emphasizes the play's weaknesses by underlining the credulity and even the downright villainy of Grandier's enemies. Jason Robards' dismaying performance only adds to the difficulties. For the glamorous, provocative Grandier, whose very reputation inspires these ambiguous ecstacies, Robards gives us a befogged somnambulist who takes the unit of meaning to be the syllable. Anne Bancroft's hand-clutching piety and humpbacked horniness preclude any atmosphere of baroque religiosity or brooding, impersonal evil. In her struggles against diabolic possession she displays the same fearlessness in combat that conquered Broadway when she took on Patty Duke in *The Miracle Worker.* On the night I saw her (Saturday) she was rewarded with a round of apparently straightfaced applause after each acrobatic bout, and before the end of the run she required hospitalization. Miss Bancroft also brings to the part of Sister Jeanne that well-known Bronx accent that was so winning in Gittel Mosca, but which helped transform Mother Courage into a querulous *Yiddishe Momme.* Anne Bancroft and Jason Robards are, unquestionably, overrated actors. But the very fact of their reputations suggests the flatness of the surrounding plain. Their limitations of style and particularly their defects of speech are characteristic of the American acting establishment. Does this inability to speak reflect some profound national defect? Does it account for the fact that our finest dramatic achievements were once in the silent film and are now in the dance? It is less gloomy to suppose that what is required is some Balanchine or Graham to impose a discipline on American actors. Graham's *Clytemnestra* was, incidentally, the most impressive dramatic event I witnessed this winter.

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Paris Review Editions, a new enterprise of *The Paris Review* in cooperation with Doubleday & Company, will publish books of outstanding merit in all fields. The books are chosen and edited by an editorial board including staff members of *The Paris Review*. Initial response to the first announcement, made last Fall, has been enthusiastic. We are pleased to announce that the first list bearing the Paris Review Editions imprint will include TLOOTH, a brilliant novel by Harry Mathews to be published late in 1966.

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Stephen Donadio

THE COLLECTED MISS PORTER

A handsome volume, this collection of Miss Porter's fiction[1] contains all of it worth having and a good deal more. In addition to the stories from *Flowering Judas* (1930), *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* (1939), and *The Leaning Tower* (1944), four are included which have never previously been collected: "The Martyr" and "Virgin Violeta" (both dated 1923), "The Fig Tree" (a missing part of *The Old Order*) and an unpublished work entitled "Holiday." It is an uneven collection, one in which the gap between the good and bad is uncommonly wide. And while one never seriously doubts, or doubts for very long, Miss Porter's powers as a craftsman, even at its best her work can be remarkably uninteresting.

At a time when many of our writers lost themselves in hot pursuit of the *Zeitgeist,* Miss Porter's literary purity must have been something to behold. But purity loses its charm when the occasion for it passes; what is likely to remain engaging is a certain amplitude of vision which involves a writer, for better or worse, in problems which are not entirely literary. For the most part, Miss Porter's work lacks that largeness of conception. Her writing is unquestionably fluent, and her stories, long and short, appear intensely self-possessed. But she is frequently inclined to make her talent count for everything; overdoing what she does well, she confronts the reader with her virtuosity so often that her stories seem to disappear. Technique is exaggerated at the expense of content: details are rendered as if they existed under glass.

As a result, there is Miss Porter's weakness for *tableaux,* especially apparent in the early stories ("Maria Concepción," for instance)

1. The Collected Stories of Katherine Anne Porter. Harcourt, Brace & World. $5.95.

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in which Mexican primitives are made to assume poses of the kind usually referred to as "artistic": they are found frozen against passionate backgrounds of "maguey thorns and the treacherous curved spines of organ cactus." These stories have a way of resolving themselves into post-card collections: "the blue of her rebozo became a dancing spot in the heat waves that rose from the gray-red soil." The male characters are very often "full-lipped," and it is customary for a young woman to have "the silence and the watchfulness of a young wild animal." Environment, in these stories, is flattened into backdrop; as a consequence, the characters begin to look like actors got up in a ritual melodrama designed to reinforce the author's preconceptions.

What is most striking about all her stories is their air of indestructible composure. Their elements seem admirably balanced and fitted, like parts of a machine. No energy is wasted here; and it is true that when, in stories like *Noon Wine,* the characters confront each other head-on, there is sudden power in the encounter. (Mr. Hatch and Mr. Thompson remain vivid because they are singular; the power of the representation derives from its incisive, unrelenting specificity.) More often, however, the author does not succeed in perceiving particulars with an intensity which would lend them the force and weight of general statement; instead, inventing circumstances which contain foregone conclusions, she elaborates general statements with appropriate details.

In the process, Miss Porter assumes the role of personnel manager with respect to her characters: they are subordinated to the immediate needs of the organization, as though the story were a business producing a single effect. The author will not allow tensions to develop between her characters and her objectives or, for that matter, between her characters and their milieu. Since the relations between these elements have already been fixed, she seems reluctant to discover other, possibly more intricate, relations. Imposing herself on them, she denies her characters all but their predetermined literary possibilities: indispensable, but not particularly interesting, they keep the action moving and are used up in the process.

In "Hacienda," for example, Kennerly, with whom the narrator is not in sympathy, seems to exist only in general: "There is always one of him on every train . . . he is a part of the scene of travel. . . . I was thinking that foreigners anywhere were three or four kinds of phonograph records, and of all of them I liked Kennerly's kind the least." Undoubtedly, she has his number; but he has been understood too simply. One wants to know what makes Kennerly different from all the others

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like him, what about him does not merely serve the generalization. As it is, both the character and his behavior remain hypothetical. The problem becomes acute in stories like "The Martyr" and "That Tree," where even the main characters are sacrificed to convenience.

No matter what their length, stories conceived in this way can be no more than anecdotes, and anecdotes can be boring. Miss Porter's are no exception. To keep the reader interested, she must keep writing, and her language, often forced to do the work of her imagination, tends to be overripe ("the leaves were budding in tiny cones of watery green besprinkling the new shoots") and sometimes ludicrously violent ("a single voice slashed the blackness"). Describing the site of an archaeological excavation, she selects a metaphor not only excessive but, under the circumstances, pointlessly grotesque: "The long crevasses, in which a man might stand without being seen, lay crisscrossed like orderly gashes of a giant scalpel." All this to make an action conceived thinly and sporadically appear continuous and dense with meaning.

With the possible exception of some parts of *Old Mortality,* Miss Porter's "southern" stories are among her least successful. In part, this is due simply to her fascination with the picturesque; but there are deeper reasons. At the end of *Old Mortality,* Miranda swears off "the legend of the past" and vows to strike through the veil of fantasy which shrouds southern experience, at least to "know the truth about what happens to me." The author attributes this vow to her heroine's "hopefulness, her ignorance." The judgment is ambiguous, for it admits the desirability of the impulse to escape historical illusion, while it condemns the ignorance which regards that escape as an imaginative possibility. The ambiguity is crucial to this story, in which two senses of the South are poised against each other; indirectly, however, it also allows the author to justify her own infatuation with the fantasy on the grounds that any attempt to resist it is hopeless and therefore naïve. As a result of this imaginative maneuver, Miss Porter's enchantment gradually assumes the character of a commitment.

The legend of the past, that "old painful structure of distorted images and misconceptions," may very well be ultimately inescapable, a secret part of what we think we are. It may also destroy us. Indeed, in *Old Mortality* it has destroyed Gabriel; ridden by alcohol and dreams, he is a man for whom the present is unreal, a man committed to the memory of someone who could not have been as beautiful, and was surely not as virtuous, as he imagines. Gabriel's condition parallels that of the South. He is in love with a past which, although existing only in his mind, continues to infect—and finally nullifies—the present.

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Unlike Faulkner, however, Miss Porter does not explore the fantasy in an attempt to exorcise it: more often, she merely reiterates it. In *The Old Order,* for instance, she indulges herself in what seems like a musical comedy treatment of the waning South, complete with a cast of foolproof obligatory characters. In these stories, which are more chatty than eloquent, the photographic realism of *Noon Wine* dissolves in a romantic haze of "mingled sweetness and corruption." Endlessly polishing the surfaces of her subject, Miss Porter fails to search out the dark recesses and extremes of shifty southern temperament, the twittering sensibility which coexists with sheer bullheadedness. By equating the dramatic with the decorative, the author suggests that tragedy is no more than a mood.

In this regard, one paragraph from "Holiday" is revealing. The narrator has just arrived to spend a month in East Texas with a German family she does not know; as she hears them talking, she thinks to herself:

> I liked the thick warm voices, and it was good not to have to listen to what they were saying. I loved that silence which means freedom from the constant pressure of other minds and other opinions and other feelings, that freedom to fold up in quiet and go back to my own center. . . . I paused there a good while listening to this muted unknown language which was silence with music in it; I could be moved and touched but not troubled by it, as by the crying of frogs or the wind in the trees.

This might serve as a description of Miss Porter's relation to her characters when she is at her least compelling. Basking in the false security of absolute control, she is free to imagine anything she likes about them, and to be touched (but not troubled) by what she imagines. But as this story itself suggests, there is a difference between human voices and "the crying of frogs," a difference in kind as well as quality. A similar difference exists between Miss Porter's best work and her worst.

Indeed, if one excludes *Noon Wine* and "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall" (a nicely executed *tour de force* of less than major interest), her most memorable stories—"Flowering Judas," *Pale Horse, Pale Rider,* and *The Leaning Tower*—are those in which the central characters are forced to test themselves against "other minds and other opinions and other feelings." In general, these stories deal with the attempts of individuals to resist everything in their experience which does not fit their own sense of themselves, to protect and preserve the secret myths enabling them to keep their lives in order.

"Flowering Judas" is concerned with Braggioni, "a good revolutionist and a professional lover of humanity," and his effect on the narrator, Laura, "who wears the uniform of an idea, and has renounced vanities."

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Although "her round white collar is not purposely nun-like," Laura's idea is one of renunciation: "Denying everything, she may walk everywhere in safety, she looks at everything without amazement." Lonely, clever, hard, Braggioni is a man living in the world; though he desires Laura, "the very cells of her flesh reject knowledge and kinship," and she cannot shake off a deep and agonizing sense of martyrdom which, as the nightmare concluding the story suggests, prevents her partaking of what presents itself to her as the body and blood of experience.

Miranda, the principal character in *Pale Horse, Pale Rider,* makes a similar attempt to resist the encroachments of the world and its inhabitants upon her. Relationships with others imply the surrender of a self which is constructed by sheer will, the only self Miranda wants to know: "she set about resisting herself methodically as if she were closing windows and doors and fastening down curtains against a rising storm." It takes an influenza epidemic to make plain her undeniable kinship with those around her. Until then, she will not yield; she has to maintain her idea of herself, an idea which experience might alter or destroy.

Dated "Berlin, 1931," *The Leaning Tower* is set in that city between the wars. Its buildings dripping with rococo angels, Berlin lingers in the mind. The Depression has contaminated everything; it has awakened feelings which turn murderous in search of objects, poisoned hopes, stirred hungers for revenge. Gathered in silent crowds before shop windows, the city's uneasy inhabitants have "faces full of hallucinated malice and a kind of sluggish but intense cruelty." Exposed to a psychic condition wholly alien to him, Charles Upton, a young American, will not allow himself to understand; he insists on his own sense of possibility. Although the story is imperfect, the relations between characters are so carefully apprehended, the presence of place felt with such power, that its effect endures.

The excellence of these stories is not, as with so many of Miss Porter's, strictly a matter of technical accomplishment; it centers upon their success in bringing characters out of laboratory conditions into the world. Once the sterile culture is exposed to the air, it reacts to it, assuming new patterns and proportions; invaded, it must change to survive. So too in these stories, where the weight of an environment is brought to bear upon the inner lives of characters. The individual life is implicated in the life of society.

In these works, the attitudes which seem to underlie much of Miss Porter's technique become her chief subjects. The nostalgia for a lost

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and probably illusory simplicity is seen as a potentially destructive aspect of an ingrained radical idealism which has tyrannized the minds of Americans for more than a century. The tendency of the characters in these stories to envision themselves as martyrs to an ideal self-conception continually converts their actual experience into a form of ritual, and they become as ruthless in their demands on the world as were the Puritans, their spiritual forebears. This slightly fanatical strain of American sensibility has engaged the imaginations of many of our writers, both in their lives and their works, from Hawthorne and James to Hemingway and Fitzgerald—all of whom were necessarily concerned with persons truer to ideas than to themselves. Such persons ask that the world be an arena in which they be allowed to prove their incorruptibility; when it is not, they make it so, withdrawing into areas of fantasy where it is possible for them (though at the cost of increasing estrangement) to maintain both their innocence and their invulnerability.

In a period which might be characterized by its worship of near-psychopathic styles of life, of elaborate and extreme forms of detachment, these stories hit a nerve. Less guarded than Miss Porter's stories usually are, they are also truer to her ambitions, more responsive to the

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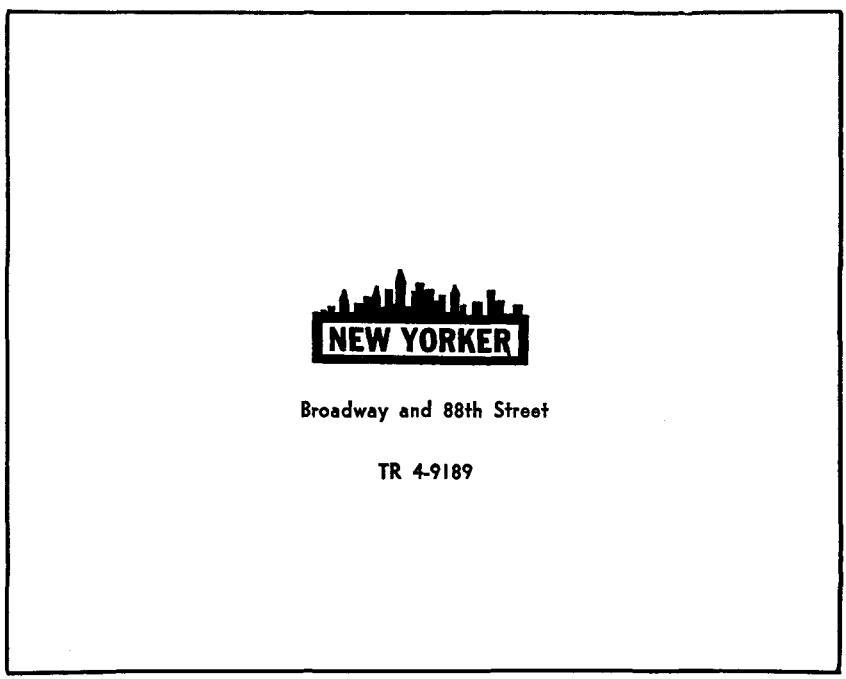
pressures which engender feelings. They reveal a deep—but not deliberate—awareness of what people do to one another. As a consequence, they provide us with that sense of the intimacy of all social contact, that sense of the density of social circumstances which convinces us that even as readers we are living in the world. Lacking that sense, fiction is faithful to nothing but illusion; to succeed, it must be faithful to the end.



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FEAR AND TREMBLING IN AMERICA

THE PARANOID STYLE IN AMERICAN POLITICS AND OTHER ESSAYS. By Richard Hofstadter. Alfred A. Knopf. $5.95.

Whenever a writer suggests an arresting and new idea to help unravel some of the mysteries of historical causation, he is promptly taken to mean, no matter how much he may protest, that this new idea alone is sufficient to account for the phenomenon under discussion. When Max Weber presented his thesis on *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* in order to lay bare the psychological conditions which made possible the development of capitalist civilization in the West, he was taken to have slighted economic factors. His explicit protestations to the contrary notwithstanding, he was said to have stressed an idealistic or spiritualistic interpretation in lieu of an economic and materialistic one. Though he was only concerned with tracing one particular causal link in the chain, he was understood to have offered a total explanation.

Something of this sort now seems to be happening to the work of Richard Hofstadter. In several of his recent books, he chose to concentrate attention on the uses of political rhetoric. More particularly, he analyzes political rhetoric to get at political pathology. "A distorted style," he reasons, "is, then, a possible signal that may alert us to a distorted judgment, just as in art an ugly style is a cue to fundamental defects of taste." I am not alone in considering that this new approach to American political history (which is paralleled, by the way, in European history by Norman Cohen in his brilliant *The Pursuit of the Millenium*) has opened up some new and exciting vistas. But just as in the case of Weber, many critics seem to have been disposed to see in it an attempt to offer a psychological alternative to an economic interpretation, where all that was intended was to offer a supplement rather than a rival claim.

Hofstadter is by no mean oblivious to the fairly obvious fact that robust considerations of class interest played a considerable role in the appeal of Goldwater to small-town businessmen or middle-layer corporate

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executives. Nor would he generally be disposed to deny that a great deal of political conflict can be accounted for as a game played by groups and parties in which rational players attempt to maximize or defend their interests. He proposes rather to examine cases in which the assumption of pure political rationality fails to account for the behavior of concrete congeries of political actors.

When Hofstadter refers to "paranoid style," he cautions that he is not using the term in a clinical sense. He is not interested in madness but wishes rather to study paranoid modes of expression used by people who, for the most part, would be considered more or less sane in clinical terms. What is meant by paranoid style is then a feeling of persecution systematized in grandiose theories of conspiracy but held by people who do not necessarily see themselves as the direct and specific target of conspiracy, as in clinical paranoia; they find it rather directed against a nation, or other collectivities to which they belong. In fact, the political passions of those given to paranoid styles are fanned by the conviction that their moral indignation and righteousness is impersonal, disinterested and unselfish.

Certain of Hofstader's critics have objected that he is disposed to discredit political causes and the motives of political actors by reference to their rhetoric. I believe that he was somewhat guilty of this in his study of populism in *The Age of Reform,* but he explicitly disavows such uses in the present study where he states explicitly that a sound program may upon occasion be advocated in a paranoid style. "Style," he says, "has to do with the way in which ideas are believed and advocated rather than with the truth or falsity of their content." The analysis of political style is no substitute for the investigation of factual assertions. Hofstadter is aware of the genetic fallacy and avoids it—most of the time at least.

The present volume falls into two parts, "Studies in the American Right," centered in discussions of McCarthyism and Goldwaterism but introduced by an illuminating essay tracing conspiratorial theories in earlier periods of American history; and three miscellaneous essays, on Manifest Destiny and the Spanish-American War, on the Anti-Trust Movement, and on a late nineteenth-century "funny money" free silver pamphleteer, William Harvey. All these essays were originally written separately for a variety of publications but the general theme nevertheless pervades the book.

Hofstadter documents the recurrence of conspiratorial theories and paranoid imagery over a long span of American history. He suggests that successive episodic waves of movements using these styles are associated with moments of political crisis when value conflicts of an ethnic or religious or moral variety seemed so exacerbating that they

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came to be seen as irreconcilable by certain political actors. When group conflicts seem negotiable, the paranoid strain recedes; when catastrophy or the fear of catastrophy seems to threaten, the paranoid style reemerges. Bargain and compromise then seem inappropriate, especially to those who fear to be the catastrophy's chief victims.

In his earlier writings, Hofstadter, along with co-thinkers like Daniel Bell and Seymour M. Lipset, introduced the term *status politics*—which they contrasted with class politics in order to explain the appeal of the New American Right in the fifties. They contended that class lines and economic interests may be the major divisive forces in periods of economic distress and scarcity, but that in a relatively affluent society the demands of groups considering themselves at a disadvantage in the distribution of scarce status may become the center of political attention. Status anxieties rather than class interests were hence seen as the major propelling force in the rise of McCarthyism. This was a suggestive interpretation, even though it suffered from a certain vagueness and was often stated in so generalized a form that one could hardly think of any data that might concretely disconfirm it; after all, there is hardly a group which could not possibly be said to suffer from one or another form of status anxiety. In the present work, Hofstadter, without abandoning this approach, agrees to some of its limitations and contends that no matter what the specific sources of political conflict, whether they are located in class, status, religious or ethnic confrontations, they may all give rise to paranoid styles on the part of men who feel that their way of life, their accustomed mental and moral framework is in danger of being irrevocably submerged by a wave of hostile and alien forces.

"Coin" Harvey and other silverites, expressing the resentment of Western farmers, focused their collective paranoia on British bankers and Wall Street conspirators. Fears of Masonic or Catholic plots flourished among common men on the Eastern seaboard in the last century, and paranoid anxiety over the Communist menace on the domestic scene may flourish alike among D. A. R.'s fearing to lose status in the modern world and among certain immigrant groups struggling to gain higher status. Despite the variety of specific sources of dissatisfaction, all these groups of men, and many others besides, felt themselves at bay, psychologically unable to deal with overpowering anxieties and conflicts through the normal channels of political debate. Hence their recourse to conspiratorial explanations for the felt loss of power, status or influence in the nation.

These essays are not meant to be definitive; they are, however, highly suggestive. All that Hofstadter can give us here are examples of the paranoid style. He is no doubt aware that, as Daniel Bell likes to

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argue, "for example" is no proof. But be this as it may, he has provided a powerful instance of the historical imagination at its best.

Lewis A. Coser

HEART OF DARKNESS

THE DICKENS THEATRE: A Reassessment of the Novels. By Robert Garis. Oxford University Press. $4.80.

Mr. Garis manages to avoid almost all the current clichés of Dickens criticism, not through willful straining after novelty, but because he radically disagrees with the whole approach to Dickens which has sprung up in the wake of Edmund Wilson's classic rehabilitation. Without being harshly polemical, this fine study is nevertheless a sustained and telling challenge to what one might call for the sake of brevity the post-Wilsonian school. Mr. Garis goes straight to the point: his basic complaint is that recent writers have either ignored or tried to conjure away "the Dickens problem," which is that while Dickens' gifts entitle him to be ranked with the great masters of fiction, he "characteristically worked in a literary and moral mode that ordinarily is taken by readers seriously interested in art to be incapable of producing 'high art.'" That mode Mr. Garis terms "theatrical." He is quick to shield Dickens from the more derogatory associations of the word, and also to make it clear that he is not drawing a simple distinction between theatricality and realism, by citing Shaw's account of Sarah Bernhardt: "she does not enter into the leading character; she substitutes herself for it." For Shaw there could be no question that her art was inferior to that of the seemingly natural and self-effacing Duse. But he was equally sure that it *was* art, and not just the "good theatre" ("her Hamlet was, from first to last, *très grande dame*") which Beerbohm mocked affectionately. Within her limits, Bernhardt was unique and irresistible, provided one was prepared to accept the illusion for what it was and take pleasure in the consummate performance rather than in the role performed. So, too, Mr. Garis would have us believe, with Dickens—and by way of example he quotes the description of Marseilles at the beginning of *Little Dorrit*. The verbal tricks and repetitions with which the blazing heat is evoked are heavily contrived, and quite apparent. We can see how it is all done. But this is precisely what we are meant to admire—the virtuosity of the execution.

One's first instinct is to protest. A connoisseur of technique may respond in this way, but for normal healthy readers the important thing about the *Little Dorrit* passage is that Marseilles has been triumphantly

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realized, that it indubitably exists. Yes, Mr. Garis retorts, so does the rabbit which the conjurer pulls out of a hat—but it is the conjurer whom one applauds. This is too neat an analogy, since in the Dickens theater a character's behavior is at least as interesting as the mere fact of his existence: the rabbits themselves start performing tricks. (So, for that matter, do the hats: Dickensian props are notoriously alive.) But Mr. Garis has a much more elaborate case to make out than the conjuring simile suggests—too elaborate to summarize here, but roughly speaking it hinges on Dickens' inability to endow his characters with inner life. The first half of this book is less a study of Dickens than a crisp and unhackneyed discussion of first principles in fiction, and especially of the imaginative sympathy which is the hallmark of the great "non-theatrical" novelists. There is perhaps a tendency to underestimate the extent to which the authors whom Mr. Garis opposes to Dickens make their idiosyncratic presence felt: a Tolstoy may achieve something like perfect transparency, but Henry James? Jane Austen? (It is amusing that in the very act of praising *Emma* as a consummate dramatic—i.e., non-theatrical—illusion, Mr. Garis should be moved to echo E. M. Forster and exclaim "How this woman can write!") However, few people will disagree that by the standards of his peers Dickens was singularly devoid of the sympathetic imagination, and its corollary, the power to make a character develop.

For Mr. Garis this is not to condemn, but to define. If we are unable to take Dickens' characters seriously, it is on account of the peculiar nature of his comic genius: his ambition is "to encompass the world through mimicry," which is no small thing. Alone among the major novelists he frequently seems childish, but childhood has its unique compensations: his early work in particular has "the self-delighting spontaneity of play." In stressing the paramount significance of Dickens' humor, it may look as though Mr. Garis has simply taken the long way round to reach the traditional point of view, but his detour is justified. In order to convince contemporary readers he has to use more finely nuanced arguments than those of the older Dickens critics, and counter objections of which they never dreamed.

Given his general position, it is a pity that Mr. Garis doesn't devote more space to the early novels, where the theatricality is uncurbed. Like the critics whom he sets out to rebut, however, he evidently finds it easier to talk about the later work. The five novels which he studies in detail all belong to the second, darker half of Dickens' career. Darker, but not necessarily deeper, for the basic artistic method is still that of external mimicry. All that has really changed is Dickens' attitude: as he becomes obsessed with the ways in which individual freedom is thwarted by the System, celebration turns to accusation. We rejoice in Pecksniffery,

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but we hate Podsnappery. So far, for Mr. Garis, so good. Where he feels uncomfortable is with Dickens' attempts in the later novels to take characters seriously, to render their problems from the inside, as he hardly ever did in his early work. Recent critics who acclaim these efforts are taking the wish for the deed, the scenario for the production. The temptation is stronger than Mr. Garis admits: it took genius to devise even the scenario of *Our Mutual Friend*, with its profound possibilities. But can we honestly say that those possibilities are impressively realized in terms of characters like Lizzie Hexam or even Eugene Wrayburn? Mr. Garis examines in considerable detail the different ways in which the conceptions of a Lizzie, a Lady Dedlock, an Arthur Clennam are marred through sentimental evasion or conventional moralizing. There is more to this than mere faultfinding. He discriminates, he praises where he can, he sympathizes with the impulses which led Dickens astray. Nevertheless the story which he has to tell is chiefly one of honorable failure.

Many of his adverse criticisms seem to me irrefutable. I agree, for instance, with his analysis of the rather distasteful sleight of hand (palming off a sexual problem as a more easily soluble financial one) by which Dickens enables Arthur Clennam to find salvation through marriage to Little Dorrit. But where I part company from him is when he goes on to assume that this leads to "the essential failure of the novel as a whole." If Dickens had completely abandoned the theatrical mode, this would be true; obviously a novel by Turgenev or George Eliot could hardly be accounted a success if we felt as many doubts about the central characters as we do about Clennam and Little Dorrit. But in what sense *are* they the central characters? Admittedly one can't overlook the implausible aspects of Clennam as cheerfully as one can those of a *jeune-premier* like Martin Chuzzlewit, just because he is potentially and to some extent actually so much more interesting a character. But surely anyone who thinks of *Little Dorrit* thinks first not of the hero and heroine, but of the Marshalsea, the Merdles, the Circumlocution Office, Bleeding Heart Yard. Rightly so, since they represent the very heart and sinews of the book, not merely incidental compensations for the hole in the middle, as one might suppose from Mr. Garis' account, which concedes that they are successful but mentions them only in passing. Nor am I persuaded that a character like Mrs. Merdle "really could have appeared in any other Dickens novel." She is not a solo turn like Mrs. Gamp, but part of a complicated social and imaginative pattern. Similarly with *Our Mutual Friend*, which according to Mr. Garis "exhibits a decided loss of inventive energy." The examples he cites, Silas Wegg and Mr. Venus, are indeed tired attempts to recapture the *brio* of twenty years before. Yet he doesn't

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make a single reference to the Podsnaps, the Veneerings, Fascination Fledgeby, who are "theatrical" triumphs, certainly, but like the Merdles and the Barnacles quite different from anything one can find in the early novels.

If the later novels do exhibit some loss of energy—no one in them is quite as demoniacal as Quilp or as exhilarating as Pecksniff—they also show more substantial gains than Mr. Garis will allow, notably greater poetic unity and sharper comic focus. His commitment to the metaphor of a Dickens theater—and however apt, it *is* only a metaphor —prevents him from doing full justice to their proliferating life (too rich to be transferred to the stage), with its thick atmosphere and skein of associations. The social satire, too, is both deeper and more pointed than vague talk about "the System" would suggest. More often than not the System is specifically Victorian society, as refracted through Dickens' genius; but in his own way Mr. Garis is as indifferent to historical considerations as Professor Hillis Miller. On the other hand *Great Expectations*, which he rates more highly than the other late novels, is surely not unique in its pessimism about ultimate social possibilities. Mr. Garis compares it to *Civilization and Its Discontents*; but then Walter Bagehot detected in all the later work "a tone of objection to the necessary constitution of human society."

One wants to quarrel with some of Mr. Garis' conclusions. But he is always relevant and often penetrating, while his tone, except when he touches his forelock to Dr. Leavis—I do wish he wouldn't talk about passages "offering themselves as representative"—is admirably thoughtful and civilized.

John Gross

CHEZ PROUST

PROUST: The Later Years. By George D. Painter. Little, Brown and Company. $7.50.

MARCEL PROUST: The Fictions of Life and of Art. By Leo Bersani. Oxford University Press. $6.50.

When the second volume of his important biography appeared, George D. Painter was again accused of model-hunting. The reviewer of the *Times Literary Supplement* (August 5, 1965) complained of the "entertaining but irrelevant game" of seeking a factual basis for every incident in Proust's novel, and indirectly provoked a rather acrid exchange of letters between a distant relative of one of the so-called "models" and Mr. Painter himself. But this was of course

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caricaturizing the real issue. What is at stake here is not whether there are seven or ten models for Albertine, and whether Marie Nordlinger was one of them, but what the limits of biography should or must be. In fact, the problem raised is the very possibility of biography.

Are the "facts" of a life permeable to a meaning and to an order imposed after the event? How justified is any teleological vision of a lived life, either in terms of the development of the man or the development of his art? It is one of the achievements of Painter's book that he does not juggle away these implicit questions, and that the limitations of this scholarly enterprise are due in large part to a clear awareness of them. In discussing Proust's condemnation of Sainte-Beuve's method, Mr. Painter feels compelled to justify his own aims. The biographical approach, he feels, need not be shallow and falsifying: the biographer's task is to discover, through a confrontation of the daily existence of the creator with his vision as artist, the occult and universal meanings of his work. But it is here, precisely, that Leo Bersani, in his *Marcel Proust: The Fictions of Life and Art,* proposes a more complex and more rewarding approach. Mr. Bersani succeeds in demonstrating that the work of art, which is no doubt determined by a given life and personality, in turn produces a new self and a new reality. In other words, the artist discovers himself and the meaning of his own work in the very process of writing.

This is not to detract from the impressive qualities of Mr. Painter's biography. He covers crucial events and reactions with precision and sensibility: Proust's growing independence vis-à-vis Ruskin, his complex attitudes toward his mother and his illness, his sense of liberation and guilt after his mother's death, the importance of summers in Cabourg and the love-hate for hotel life, the vicissitudes of publication, the tragic love for Agostinelli, the sadness of the war years, the descent into the hell of Sodom—but above all, and increasingly as death approached, what Mr. Painter admirably describes as "Proust's iron courage and inflexible ambition for his book. . . ."

As for the scholarship, it appears unimpeachable. Mr. Painter provides a model of solidity, sobriety and allegiance to facts. What is more, he succeeds in combining masterful documentation with intelligent discussion. And yet, somehow, this second volume remains strangely frustrating. I refer not only to some petty shortcomings, such as an almost systematic refusal ever to quote in French (even when dealing with puns), some needless digressions, a curious weakness for the French aristocracy, occasional dryness and even a sense of fragmentation. More serious is the disappointing distance from Proust's inner self. Somehow, despite the hundreds of pages of intimate facts, we do not seem to "live" with the author, we do not really "participate" in his spiritual

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and affective journey. Is this a fault or a virtue of the disciplined biographer? One thing is certain: Mr. Painter refuses to write a novel.

The pleasures to be derived from Leo Bersani's *Marcel Proust: The Fictions of Life and Art* are of a different kind. With refined critical perception, Mr. Bersani succeeds in plunging his reader into the very heart of the Proustian creation. The first striking feature of this book is the intelligence and skill with which the general problems of the novel are discussed. Not only does Mr. Bersani analyze with considerable subtlety the erotic complexities of *A la Recherche du temps perdu*, the subversive handlings of point of view, the degrees of reality; but, equipped with a solid literary background, he raises many practical and theoretical questions which cast light on the art of the modern novel. His remarks on Flaubert, for instance, are brilliant.

Mr. Bersani proceeds from Proust's own comments on the interchangeability of imagination and sensibility. He might have illustrated this remark historically and esthetically by references to Stendhal, whose entire work is the product of a chronic tension between autobiography and fiction. The approach is fruitful, because it permits Mr. Bersani to do away with some of the hackneyed notions of sources, models and creative determinism. For what counts here is the search for a specific literary self to be discovered in the very act of creation. Thus the work can be said to create the man. Writing becomes an exercise in self-revision. Mr. Bersani insists, justly it seems to me, that involuntary memory does not create a sense of continuity, that in fact Proust's artistic efforts do not ultimately tend toward recapturing the immediacy of a past experience, but rather toward a psychological, metaphoric and analogical sense of structure and unity. It is in this light that the discussions of memory as metaphor, and of the analogical density of Proust's social themes and satire, are particularly relevant.

I only wish Mr. Bersani had omitted, or streamlined considerably, the somewhat ponderous account, at the beginning of the book, of recent French criticism (Bachelard, Mauron, Richard, Poulet, Starobinski). There is something too didactic and too precautionary about these pages. Why so much theorizing at the beginning of the book? But these matters are trifles. My one real disagreement with Mr. Bersani has to do with his shocking underestimation of Proust's discussions on art. But even this sinful blindness is largely redeemed by an otherwise exciting, unpretentious and yet intensely sophisticated study.

Victor Brombert

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THE UNDERGROUND MAN

THE MARQUIS DE SADE: The Complete Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom, and Other Writings. Translated by Richard Seaver and Austryn Wainhouse. Grove Press. $15.00.

The Marquis de Sade is a footnote to the eighteenth century, hidden at the center of things. While he is not ranked among the *philosophes,* Sade is perversely necessary to the mentality they set in motion. History, not his genius, is responsible for his moral and intellectual position; as an artist, he cannot stand alone. I imagine few will find Richard Seaver's and Austryn Wainhouse's new, respectable, well-translated selection more satisfying than the old Sadean romance: the one hundred and twenty savage nights behind the walls of La Coste; the grandeur of unbridled lust; the damned old man burning out his desire in the gloom of the Bastille.

If one comes to Sade after Nietzsche, Symbolism, *les poètes maudits,* after the other great explorations of depravity in bourgeois society (Richardson, Laclos), his effect is perhaps revelatory—certainly unsettling. These hysterical, vile, comic, peculiarly unsatisfying books—so inferior by conventional ideas of what the novel is—seem to foreshadow the most interesting literary developments of modern times. Or rather, they strive toward them with a certain vicious (Sadistic?) yearning. But if it is embarrassing and absurd to compare *Eugénie de Franval* with *Adolphe, Justine* with *Les Liaisons Dangereuses,* why should Sade be so important? Why does one return to him, as Baudelaire said, again, and again?

Pour expliquer le mal, Baudelaire thought; and Sade probably has become a more useful text in the criticism of depravity than most traditional models. But Baudelaire's evil was part of a poetic principle; and while Sade was the guiding light to authentic formal innovators like Baudelaire, he himself could not create anything new. He could only contort what was given. His failure to transcend traditional forms—however much he might populate them with the obscene or bizarre or gratuitous—determines his role in literature. The Divine Marquis, the arch-immoralist, chose to write only didactic *récits,* Socratic dialogues, Richardsonian picaresques—partly because these were the only patterns the age had to offer. But more important, he chose them because he was trying to vindicate himself in moral—that is, social—terms, and for this, conventional forms offered the only imaginative possibility. In his case, the two motives are actually the same. Sade was a man *in extremis* who wrote to save himself, and, sophistical fantasist though he was, he was too honest, and his pathological solitude was too desperate, for the

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consolation of some visionary transcendence of the bourgeois world-view his age was rapidly making the modern condition. At the same time, Sade's energy—the clenched, intense *ressentiment* of impotence—immeasurably surpassed the limitations of the standard formulas. He does not fully exploit the formulas, he batters against them, as if they were his prison. The gruesome repetitions of incident, the ghastly "philosophy" that has to be endured again and again, the vapid, walk-through chapters in which he has, for the moment, given up, are the hysterical scratchings and bangings of claustrophobia.

Language itself is Sade's prison; he is irrepressibly tempted by the demonism of tampering with the Word. And perhaps the only philosophically justifiable aspect of his bitter hatred of everything outside himself is his hatred of language. It is thus the only aspect of his furious, logorrheic desire for self-vindication he cannot even begin to put into words. Like Faust, who cannot be a poet, but only the subject of poetry, Sade fails because he is transfixed by his will to rebellion. "Always choose in favor of yourself," he never tires of saying in an iconoclastic blaze. But despite the supreme egoism of his characters and the sense in which he displays the selfishness of a man who lives under perpetual threat, Sade, in the deepest sense, could not choose in favor of himself because he could not speak for himself. He could only listen to his own voice talking about others and his own hatred of them. His demonism can never move beyond demonism, for the very Sadism of his writing negatively establishes the impenetrability of Virtue, reason and measure. Justine—and the eighteeenth-century novel—govern him.

"Cruelty," he writes in *Philosophie dans le Boudoir,* "is simply the energy in a man civilization has not yet altogether corrupted"; and this relation between energy and society is decisive in Sade. To be sure, he could only fail using the literary forms of his age (i.e., its assumptions about the nature of man). But the problem in Sade is not merely esthetic, or, for that matter, ethical; it is the problem of solitude. His work is a tragic reinterpretation of Rousseau's famous sentence: for Sade, man is born alone, and everywhere we see him with others. For just as bourgeois sociology has undermined the metaphysical support for fantasy, it has denied solitude as the ground of freedom. Premodern and romantic imaginative forms—religion, tragedy, the epic, visionary elevation, prayer—support a fundamental privacy by a denial of things as they are and a dream of reconciliation. They make the unique communal. The eighteenth century wanted only the communal to be communal; in the bourgeois world, solitude has characteristically been offered nothing to affirm or authenticate its value. The artist cannot assimilate others into his imaginative life; instead, he must himself be assimilated into a purely social reality. When Sade asserts the claims of the "in-

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dividual" over social responsibility, libertinage has become the metaphor for an isolation without human legitimacy. This is his importance as a moralist.

The problem is that Sade's cruel moralism is directly opposed to the enormous prestige of love. The energy of which he speaks—and it is absolutely extraordinary—is dynamic because it is anguished. It cannot—to speak in the broadest terms—come to an achieved selfhood in the experience of another. This energy cannot come to rest in love. It was when Sade was cut off from the world by his illness and the Bastille that he could emerge from his divine isolation to grapple with an impenetrable exterior world, to confront it in imagination, alone. He was *forced* to assimilate the exterior world into his imagination. However much he might distort this world (for the sake of verisimilitude, there might be *somebody* in *Justine* who is not depraved) he had to pay the price when it stubbornly retained its externality, and when he discovered he had no words to support his radical assertion of privacy. Unable to create anything but the external, he could only make himself real through an unjustifiable rage against it. To *be* at all, he had to be guilty.

Since he could neither reject nor love the outside world, he did the two next best things; he argued with it and he raped it. Both aspects of this comic, double-edged destiny were condemned to failure. Argument, of course, offered nothing: it was entirely rigged against him. And sexuality, for someone who cannot experience himself as part of another, can become pornography: cruel and obscene, a poetry of spiritual bondage. Both reason and sexuality are consummated in shared experience, and despite his guilty, voiceless solitude, Sade did not seek tolerance, or sympathy, or company. He wanted freedom. The romantic satisfaction of this need—the transfer of the erotic into Kant's esthetic dimension, for example, or humanistic pantheism—were denied to Sade. He confronted with fierce and prophetic forthrightness the possibility that an esthetic of repose based upon love may no longer be available. His ruthless honesty, his relevance and his threat grow from his ability to live with this in all his unforgiving rage. As an artist, Sade "chose in favor of" others, in favor of slavery, in favor of the revolutionary energy of *ressentiment*. To exist at all, he chose in favor of a self he could never create except negatively, and he chose against literature. He is of course an artist, but one who can't stop. The solitude that before his time became real through esthetic reconciliation, and after his time by Mallarmé's aspiration to silence, could be for him only a shriek of hatred. Naturally his books have a *deus ex machina,* because books have to end. The repentant M. de Franval is crushed by a resentful world. Justine's breast is shattered by lightning. But here reconciliation

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and silence have become annihilation. And in his will, Sade directed that his own body be hidden in an unmarked grave.

Sade's interest, then, emerges from the record he left, at the beginning of the modern age, of an esthetic impoverishment and excruciation which has become one source of modern creativity. This is the real threat of Sade, and the amazing energy he directed against a world defined by its barrenness is the reason for his underground durability. Nobody but an incurably misguided romantic would read Sade for titillation any more, and whoever prefers his fiction to that of, say, Laclos, has pretty bad taste in fiction. Ultimately, it is a comic irony to call this impotent, paralyzed man a liberating force. But there is, I suppose, a certain freedom in knowing where one stands. His encounter with the imagination and with language strikes, with the Sadistic energy which is its only real merit, at the most pressing issues of modern expression. "What is the answer?" Gertrude Stein once asked nobody in particular. "Well then, what is the question?" For many, Sade is the question.

Stephen Koch

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ELIOT RETROSPECTIVE

TO CRITICIZE THE CRITIC AND OTHER WRITINGS. By T. S. Eliot. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. $4.95.

I find this posthumous collection of T. S. Eliot's critical essays disappointing—though I did praise his last general collection, *On Poetry and Poets* (1957). To be sure, it did not have the bite and dash, the splendidly arrogant militancy of the incomparable *Selected Essays: 1917-1932*; it gave us, instead, judicious studies written for the ages rather than to fight the battles of the moment, battles for the kind of poetry and criticism Eliot and his friends were trying to launch. It was the appropriate book for a man who had by World War II won all his battles.

Judiciousness characterizes the more recent essays in this third general collection, *To Criticize the Critic*. But there is a lack here of intellectual energy and even of confidence, which might be attributable to age were it not that most of the essays are contemporaneous with the essays in *On Poetry and Poets*. In the title essay, however, which is the most recent (1961), one detects an old man's quavering voice. Whereas in the earlier volume Eliot revised old ideas to frame new ones, he here indulges in the rather embarrassing repudiation of youthful indiscretions without taking any new stands. He complains of being haunted by his belligerent proclamation of 1927 that he was "a classicist in literature, a royalist in politics, and an Anglo-Catholic in religion." Yet he is still, he admits, all these things; it is the tone of voice he would change.

Eliot complains that critics do not take into account the dates of his essays and therefore "the distance of time that separates the author when he wrote it from the author as he is today." He is right of course; the difficulty is that "the author as he is today" may be the author who matters least. We see the living writer's resentment of the strangely formidable figure of himself that has already got fixed in literary history. The real man calls out to us that he has gone on living and changing and that he never was all that highfalutin anyway. Elsewhere in the volume Eliot tells how he has been unsuccessfully trying to disentangle himself from an undeserved reputation for erudition; and he apologizes in this essay for his earlier arrogance, even professing no longer to understand the meaning of certain early statements. Such modesty, admirable in a Christian gentleman, is disturbing in the critic *qua* critic.

Actually, Eliot mixes with his apologies his old self-confident claim that it is only poet-critics like Pound and himself who can write really useful, here he says "pure," literary criticism. He has come to realize that

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his famous old phrases, "dissociation of sensibility" and "objective correlative," were after all only "conceptual symbols for emotional preferences," but that they were efficacious just because they justified and explained his own poetry. This much is worthwhile, as is the essay's biographical information—Eliot's description of three phases in his critical writing or of his curiously ambivalent attitude toward D. H. Lawrence.

Part of the trouble with this volume is that all the pieces, except the two from 1917, are lectures that were never tightened up for publication. The series on education is so long-winded and vacuous as to be unreadable. The other lectures are good enough—and "From Poe to Valéry" is so good—as to make us appreciate Eliot's rigor in not having collected them in *On Poetry and Poets*. "American Literature and the American Language," "The Literature of Politics" and "The Classics and the Man of Letters" are abortive; they raise interesting questions, but either ramble away from them or do not develop them as would a full-scale essay. "What Dante Means to Me" is valuable, since Eliot tells how he learned from Baudelaire to use the sordid aspects of the modern big city as a subject for poetry, and learned from Dante to locate the city in hell. When he discusses the technical problem of writing in "Little Gidding" the equivalent to a canto of Dante, we see the master-critic operating again. But even this fine little piece is, as Eliot makes clear at the outset, a mere postscript to the big "Dante" of *Selected Essays*.

In the "Classics" essay, we behold an erstwhile leader of the avant-garde distinguish between taste and fashion, and warn—a warning pertinent to New York at this moment—that the present danger may be "the eccentricity and even charlatanism of the new." The antidote, says Eliot, is a sense of literary continuity. But he is surely falling back on ritualistic homage in suggesting classical education as a panacea. What I read as a lack of confidence may be Eliot's own sense in these essays that he has not really thought their subjects through.

"From Poe to Valéry" tries to account for the disparity between Poe's middling position in Anglo-American letters and the reverence in which he was held by such impressive judges as Baudelaire, Mallarmé and Valéry. Eliot shows how "impure" Poe's language is, how he sacrifices sense to sound. But Eliot thinks the Frenchmen did not know English well enough to be disturbed by this; they were able to find in Poe's attention to sound a model for *la poésie pure*. Valéry found in "The Philosophy of Composition," in which Poe analyzes the composition of "The Raven," a method and a subject—that of observing himself write. But Eliot has little respect for "The Philosophy of Composition"—it may be a hoax. He has not in short a good word to say of

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Poe, but can end this way: "I find that by trying to look at Poe through the eyes of Baudelaire, Mallarmé and most of all Valéry, I become more thoroughly convinced of his importance, of the importance of his *work* as a whole." Why did he not simply say that he was interested in the Frenchmen and in their significant misunderstanding of the American? Eliot may not have collected this otherwise excellent essay because of his inability to define a position on Poe.

He considers the line from Poe to Valéry, the line to which he belongs, the most important development in modern poetry, but thinks such extreme self-consciousness and concern for language may have reached a dead end. Here and elsewhere in this volume, Eliot uses the acute historical consciousness that has given his criticism so much authority to speculate on what in his own practice and theory will in future prove obsolete.

The two 1917 pieces bristle, instead, with the confidence of a young man who is sure he owns the future. Originally an anonymous little book, "Ezra Pound: His Metric and Poetry," is mainly valuable historically, as a polemic. But it does show Eliot trying a kind of criticism at which he was to excel, criticism by apt quotation. "Reflections on *Vers Libre*" opens with the stirring cry that "*Vers libre* does not exist," for "there is no freedom in art." The essay is priceless because it describes the exacting art of Eliot's own free verse—that verse of shifting rather than regular patterns of meter and rhyme which is his supreme technical achievement. Eliot may have considered this essay too fragmentary to reprint, but it, the "Dante" and the "Poe" are the best things in the book. We must be grateful, however, for the whole collection; for when we have a writer of Eliot's stature, a writer whose place in English literature is already secure, we want all his work in print—for the record.

Robert Langbaum

LAWRENCE OF AFRICA

AFRICAN STORIES. By Doris Lessing. Simon and Schuster. $7.95.

Doris Lessing's stories are not the equal of Lawrence's greatest, but she invites the comparison and she isn't disgraced by it. In her magnificent novel, *The Golden Notebook*, the influence is less pronounced, but in the stories it often reaches the point of actual imitation. There is a better and a worse side to this. When Mrs. Lessing echoes

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Lawrence's themes, motifs and vocabulary, when she preaches his doctrine, she often seems simply derivative and occasionally she sounds false. But when she almost unconsciously imitates Lawrence's everyday methods, her stories can be as good as his minor ones, which is to say that they are very good indeed.

It is primarily a matter of the swift directness and the generalizing intelligence of the voice itself. Mrs. Lessing's voice has the Laurentian confidence that one can manage the language of fiction by counting the dollars instead of the pennies. This works because she grasps the story as a whole and because it is usually a big story, not in the number of its words but in the number of its events. Here is the beginning of "Old John's Place":

> The people of the district, mostly solidly established farmers who intended to live and die on their land, had become used to a certain kind of person buying a farm, settling on it with a vagabond excitement, but with one eye always on the attractions of the nearest town, and then flying off again after a year or two, leaving behind them a sense of puzzled failure, a desolation even worse than usual, for the reason that they had taken no more than a vagabond's interest in homestead and stock and land.

"A certain kind of person" and "a vagabond excitement" and "a desolation worse than usual"—what do these words mean? Whose sense of failure is it and why? Nothing is rendered—yet. But you could say the same of many of Lawrence's beginnings. A voice is rapidly and surely sketching in an action about a whole "district"; it is dividing people into large generalized "kinds"; it is inviting us to trust that something interesting can still be said on such a large scale and in such large terms. The invitation is attractive but we are likely to be distrustful and the big question is how Mrs. Lessing rewards our trust; for more often than not she does.

It is not because the "district" is African, though the collection of all of her African stories into one volume might suggest that it is. Much of Mrs. Lessing's news from Africa seems authentic but one cannot honestly say that it seems really new. This writer's special gift, here as in *The Golden Notebook*, is to be remarkably interesting without being very original. Sometimes she achieves this against recklessly (or even naïvely) dangerous odds. When I first read *Five* (a collection of long stories, four of which are included in *African Stories*) I didn't finish one called "Eldorado," for when I glanced back at the story's title after my first glimpse of its subject—an impractical pioneer farmer

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who comes to believe there is gold on his land—I lost faith in Mrs. Lessing's methods and, specifically, in her taste. A friend rightly told me to look again. Much of what I had expected does happen. The obsessed man lets the farm go to ruin; his wife turns sour and puts her hope in the son, but he turns out to be just as cold to her ideal of self-betterment through education as to his father's incompetent fanaticism; yet the son feels the pull of the gold too, forms a casual partnership with a small-time prospector, and it is they who actually find the gold. Now all of this teeters so dangerously on the brink of banality that it is particularly instructive about the nature of Mrs. Lessing's talent to see how she escapes the disaster I expected. She neither tastefully soft-pedals, nor excitedly intensifies, the pattern. Instead, she straightforwardly sets out to earn the strong ironic effect she wants by a full accumulation of accurately observed and rendered action:

> Paul would have liked to accept [his mother's silence about a new twist in the father's obsession] at its surface value, for it would have left him free to move cheerfully from one parent to the other without feeling guilt. But he was deeply disturbed. He saw his mother, with the new eyes of adolescence, for the first time, as distinct from *feeling* her, as the maternal *image*. He saw her, critically, as a fading, tired woman, with grey hair. He watched her at evening, sitting by the lamp, with the mending on her lap, in the shabby living-room; he saw how she knitted her brows and peered to thread a needle; and how the sock or shirt might lie forgotten while she went off into some dream of her own which kept her motionless, her face sad and pinched, for half an hour at a time, while her hands rubbed unconsciously in a hard and nervous movement over the arms of the chair. It is always a bad time when a son grows up and sees his mother as an elderly lady; but this did not last longer than a few days with Paul; because at once the pathos and tiredness of her gripped him, and with it, a sullen anger against his own father.

No major revelation about adolescence here, and the relationship between the words I have italicized is hardly exact. But the elderly lady's dry mechanical habits are accurately recorded and they make the distinction between the new "seeing" and the old "feeling" convincing; then the easy word "pathos" can also adequately and accurately express the result of seeing. Almost every paragraph in the story contains as much action as this and all of these actions are rendered with the same sufficiency. Sufficiency doesn't sound like much, but it is what makes the minor stories of Lawrence and Chekhov independently valuable, not just failed major works. It is in fact a sign of major talent,

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for it derives from good judgment in almost the Johnsonian sense. Like Lawrence and Chekhov, Mrs. Lessing has looked at many different kinds of people with unusual curiosity and intelligence and has arrived at sure judgments about them.

Her judgment falters sometimes when she attempts the higher reaches of the Laurentian vision or encourages herself in political dreams: she has found her own vein of major insight only in the painfully honest immersion into obsessive self-doubt (about both sex and politics) that has made the stature of *The Golden Notebook* so controversial. In "The Antheap" (on the whole an excellent story) a white boy and a half-caste boy fight their way through, by Laurentian wrestling-bouts, to an implausibly ideal relationship: "the last strain of dislike between them vanished"—Lawrence's visionary explorations have been debased into a recipe for good masculine love-relationships, and interracial ones in the bargain. An even more facile wishful thinking dominates a long disaster called "Hunger." "We, says Jabavu over and over again, We. And it is as if in his empty hands are the warm hands of brothers"—this ending shares with every word of the story the true stink of popular-front uplift (but Mrs. Lessing herself has disowned the story). On the other hand, "Winter in July," a story about a woman and her two men, sounds just like major Lawrence and happens to be nearly worthy of him. But such open imitation of another writer's *special* way of rendering human relationships remains for me an oddly disturbing practice. I am happier with the less ambitious attempts. There are several stories about what has to be called "a young girl's awakening consciousness" of race or sex: Mrs. Lessing's incapacity to be bored by the familiar theme disarms you and then she rewards you with solid achievement. Finally, there is "A Story of Two Dogs," in which a puppy is brought in to keep the "good" older dog from playing with the "bad" native dogs but then seduces the good dog into genuinely alarming wildness. The human analogy is always there, sometimes emphatically, but there is also the gift of looking closely at *any* behavior, animal or human, and of constructing an action on a large scale about it. Again one is reminded of Lawrence, and of his friends' testimony about how attentively he looked at everything. The sources of interesting and important art are often very simple.

Robert Garis

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A REVOLUTION BETRAYED

THE AGE OF THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION: A Political History. By Robert R. Palmer. Princeton University Press. $20.00.

Tocqueville was the first historian of the French Revolution to describe it as a "European" or "Western" revolution. Like Tocqueville, Palmer sees the events of American and European history in the period from 1763 to 1800 "as a single movement, revolutionary in character, for which the word 'democratic' is appropriate and enlightening." What Palmer adds to Tocqueville's conception is by way of thoroughness and precision: where Tocqueville merely sketches the common experience, both institutional and ideological, which led to the "world-wide" Revolution, Palmer makes an heroic attempt, while marking the similarities, to render the national peculiarities of any and all the countries which before and after 1789 participated in the conflict between "democrats" and "aristocrats."

Indeed, the scope of Palmer's enterprise, considering the thoroughness with which he executes it, is astounding. His work represents an artful synthesis of the best and most up-to-date monographic research now available on the social and, especially, the political history of the late eighteenth century. In these two substantial volumes, Palmer describes political developments not only in France, Britain and America, but in Sweden, Russia, Poland, Austria, Hungary, Holland, the Austrian Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany and Italy as well. Yet for all its usefulness as a compendium on the political history of the latter half of the eighteenth century, Palmer's enterprise fails to add significantly to our understanding of the Revolution. It fails because it presents a largely distorted picture of the Revolution, both of its place in the context of eighteenth-century European history and its subsequent effect on the history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In dealing, as he says, "with Western Civilization as a whole, at a critical moment in its history," Palmer treats the Revolution in France itself as only one aspect of a general revolutionary movement. But in fact, what makes the French Revolution so very important in European and world history is precisely that, in its origin and in its course of development, it is *not* analogous to events elsewhere: it is not the core of an occidental revolution, but an anomaly in eighteenth-century European history, a breach in the solid front of the Old Regime.

In his first volume, Palmer says, correctly, that there was in France and throughout Europe in the late eighteenth century a conservative or aristocratic reaction to the monarchical absolutism of the Old Regime.

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But in the case of France, this general aristocratic reaction was something of a farce—a dangerous farce, but a farce nonetheless—because in France royal absolutism, or anything vaguely approaching it, was merely a fiction. Everywhere else in Europe after 1760 autocratic monarchs, assisted by imaginative and forceful ministers, were reforming and modernizing their states from above. Hence the reaction of the traditional privileged classes —the aristocracy and the clergy—who quite naturally saw in the strengthening of the central royal power a threat to their own "liberties" and regional autonomy. In France, however, the aristocratic reaction is the consequence not of royal power but of royal ineptitude and weakness—the French monarchy had by the end of the eighteenth century brought France to bankruptcy and nearly reduced her to a second-rate power. The fact is that the French Revolution was made necessary by a situation which has no analogy elsewhere—the increasing inability of the French monarchy, from about the second half of Louis XIV's reign, to govern effectively. Hence no mere "revolt," but a real "Revolution"—a radical transformation of the entire political and social order—was in the cards for France: for any honest attempt at reform, no matter how initially moderate in nature, would have sooner or later to direct its energies against the very keystone of the *ancien régime*—the "absolute" monarchy itself.

The development of the Revolution in France follows from this. In its first phase, as is well-known, the Revolution was characterized by moderation. It was only when Louis XVI, acting perfectly in character, tried to flee from France in June, 1791, that the moderate course of the Revolution was abandoned and a more radical direction gradually began to take shape. The first effect of the king's flight was to assure his own eventual demise and that of the monarchy as an institution as well: his action demonstrated that the continued existence of the monarchy in France was incompatible with the aims of the Revolution, with its demands either for social and political reform or for effective government. Moreover, in fleeing from France, the king served notice to his fellow monarchs that he had refused to accept the Revolution and that he trusted to them to help him destroy it. In turn, the flight of the king, and the overnight *popular* disenchantment with the monarchy that followed it, discredited the more moderate revolutionists who had supported the king, thereby opening the way for a new, more radical leadership of the Revolution.

It was, of course, with the War of 1792 that the Revolution extended itself beyond the frontiers of France. Yet this is not to say, as Palmer does, that "with the war, a specifically French Revolution was merged into a more general Revolution of Western Civilization." The

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war itself was a consequence of the revolutionary situation in France; and the revolutions which took place in other nations in the last years of the eighteenth century were, similarly, a direct outgrowth of the French Revolution. Most of these revolutions were made possible and sustained by French aid. Where such aid was unavailable or unsuccessful, as in Ireland, Hungary or Poland, attempts at revolution failed. Europe in the seventeen nineties could experience the Revolution only as an export because the dynamic social forces which produced the Revolution in France—and which gave that conflict its vast scope and significance—had not yet developed within it.

The French Revolution of 1789 was made possible by the unique alliance of a powerful and wealthy bourgeoisie with a numerous peasantry. It was this alliance, inconceivable elsewhere, which initially gave the Revolution its democratic character. And it was another and later alliance—this time between a more radical segment of the middle-class (the Montagnards) and the artisan urban masses (*sans-culottes*) which in 1793, after the flight of the king and the fall of the monarchy, preserved and furthered the Revolution. This alliance, which brought about what Palmer has called "the second Revolution," was far more popular, democratic and egalitarian than the first: it was in fact an experiment, however partial and finally unsuccessful, in social democracy. Though short-lived, it underlined the uniqueness of the French Revolution—its radicalism, its truly social revolutionary character, its "mission," in the words of Georges Lefebvre, "to be the revolution of equality."

But by 1795 this "revolution of equality" was no more. And this is the special tragedy of the French Revolution: that the bourgeoisie who began it by proclaiming the radical and universal doctrine that all men are by "nature" equal in rights—these rights being "liberty, property, security and resistance to oppression"—should have betrayed it in a period of social reaction by claiming that these rights were exclusively reserved for the middle class, for the owners of property who alone were "interested in the keeping of the law." The "letter" of this law was, to be sure, liberal and constitutionalist—the men of Thermidor and the Directory did not wholly repudiate the Revolution: they merely condemned democracy *along with* the Old Regime, and gave to liberalism a somewhat narrower connotation by transforming it from the universal law of "nature" and "reason" into their own class ideology. The "spirit" of Thermidor and the Directory is accurately represented by the Thermidorian Boissy d'Anglas, who identified the middle class as "the best citizens" and declared that "a country governed by landowners is in the social order, whereas one governed by persons other than property owners is in a state of nature." How sad, then, that it was this regime, rather

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than the democratic one which had preceeded it, which showed itself as more eager to extend the Revolution to the rest of Europe, and which, in Palmer's words, "became an inspiration for analogous developments in other countries."

In the second volume of *The Age of the Democratic Revolution,* Palmer insists—as he must if his thesis is to hold up—that the Directorial regime "was such that a more broadly based democratic movement could legally take place under it." But Palmer's stress on the word "legality" shows the dubious foundation of his argument. Legality is a misleading standard with which to judge the Directory, because in the five years in which it governed France, it employed any and all means, legal and extra-legal alike, in resisting every attempt of the more democratic elements to broaden the base and change the character of the regime; and it dealt swiftly and savagely, not only with the extreme Left, but also—with the *coup d'état* in Floréal, 1798—with a legally elected "democratic" chamber.

Palmer's curious treatment of the Directory, his ambiguous denial of its exclusive and undemocratic character, has its source in the ideological concern which animates his entire study—that is, in his desire to "dissociate," as far as possible, the French from the Russian Revolution. For if the Directory can be understood as a "democratic" regime, it is then legitimate to say that the "revolutionary-democratic" movement attained its first "high tide" in the late eighteenth century, with the short-lived victory of French armies all over Europe; and that, some fifty years later, this movement was brought to fruition, this time *without* French aid, in the Revolution of 1848. And if this is true, if "democracy" is the child of an eighteenth-century Western Revolution, then the social doctrines of Karl Marx and of modern Communism—to which Palmer admittedly feels "a certain lack of cordiality"—are totally irrelevant to the Western world. Indeed Marx, who claimed that

> . . . The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. . . ,

can be disposed of as "dogmatic," and we in the West can confidently affirm, with Tocqueville, that "the gradual trend toward equality of conditions is a fact of Providence, of which it bears the principal characteristics: it is universal, it is enduring, it constantly eludes human powers of control; all events and all men contribute to its development."

But the connection between the French and the Russian Revolution cannot be so easily dismissed. For Marxism was in part inspired by the

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French Revolution. *The Communist Manifesto* of 1848 owes much to the democratic revolution that took place in France from 1789 to 1794—through the medium of French Socialist theory, which was impregnated with the tradition of Robespierrist or Babouvist social democracy, and through German Idealism, which claimed to be the theory of the French Revolution. What is more, Marxism first comes to the fore as a revolutionary movement in the period which may be seen as the link between the two revolutions—the period in history which saw the failure of the democratic promise of the first and the beginning of the egalitarian promise of the second—that is, the Revolution of 1848. It was only after the European Revolution of 1848-1851 had repeated the pattern of the French Revolution of 1789-1799—the transformation of the democratic "revolution of equality" into "bourgeois-liberal" society—that Marx could exorcise "the ghost of the old Revolution," and warn that "the social revolution of the nineteenth century cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future." And at that point, and only then, does "the spectre of communism" begin in earnest to haunt the continent of Europe.

Wallace Katz

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RADICAL QUESTIONS by Irving Howe

(*Continued from Page* 192)

There is no easy solution to the dilemma Rustin describes: that the Negro movement is, at least intermittently, more active and alive than its potential allies, but that the socio-economic situation makes it impossible for the movement to achieve its aims short of stirring those potential allies into a bolder action they may resist or refuse. Consequently, within the Negro movement there will be sharper internal strains and factionalism than during the past few years, with some following Rustin's policy, others exhausting themselves in an increasingly desperate activism, and still others straying into an apocalyptic, semi-nationalist "radicalism." For through the very intensity of its work and the defined limits of its success, the civil rights movement dramatizes its own insufficiency. It is a movement desperately in need of political-intellectual help; yet the very situation giving rise to that need also creates intense resistance to any efforts that might satisfy it. Nor, for that matter, is the Negro movement a movement in the traditional sense. It is a loose alliance of organizations, some of them large and with nominal demands upon their members, others composed of full-time elite activists; and, as a result, there are special difficulties in working out programs and strategies. One can barely speak of a Negro political intelligentsia attached to or associated with the movement, who might provide some intellectual substance; indeed, given the kind of advice offered by certain Negro writers, it is perhaps just as well that they are detached from the movement. And it is a further difficulty that the most active, though not necessarily most representative, sectors of the Negro movement are often hostile to liberals and intellectuals, partly for reasons that can be understood if not accepted, but also for perfectly sound reasons: too many liberals and intellectuals, still sunk in the apolitical moods of the fifties, have shown little inclination toward active participation or help.

That the Negro protest movement will emerge from its present state of uncertainty—a condition at least partly the result of its notable victories these past several years—seems quite certain. The very magnitude of the tasks still facing it will be a powerful stimulus to strategic innovation and tactical ingenuity. But the hopes of a few years ago that as a direct consequence of the civil rights struggle there might emerge a larger movement for social radicalism seem unlikely to be fulfilled. Though it has already had a profoundly refreshing and valuable impact upon American society, the Negro movement cannot, by itself,

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be expected to do what more powerful and numerous segments of the society have neither cared nor been able to.

The alignment of forces within the United States which makes possible a moderate if insufficient progress in domestic affairs simply breaks down when it has to confront foreign policy. For here the issues are ambiguous, complex and charged with emotion, certainly more so than in regard to, say, an education bill; here the psychic smog of the Cold War still hangs across the national horizon. The loose coalition of labor, liberal, Negro, church and minority groups which usually supports welfare measures has no consensus within itself regarding foreign policy—or, perhaps more accurately, a large part of this coalition tends unreflectively to go along with the Johnson administration. Except for a tiny fringe emotionally caught up with charismatic figures abroad, the Negro movement has little to say about Vietnam and the Dominican Republic, and its constituency cares even less. In regard to foreign policy the trade unions are quiescent, ritualistically liberal in one or two instances, and sometimes merely reactionary. Sustained dissent on foreign policy comes only from minority segments of the academic world, small groups of pacifists and some liberals. The result is more impressive for articulateness than mass support.

Yet if one remembers how narrowly based this dissent actually is within the academic and intellectual worlds, one is struck by the moderating effect it has had upon the formation of foreign policy. Certain academics, hand-wringers of alienation, complain that no one listens; I, aware of how few people are complaining, am astonished that anyone does listen. Perhaps this is due to the fact that in a mass society, which may necessarily mean a society in which large portions of the population are politically indifferent and passive, there is always the possibility for aggressive minority groups to exert a disproportionate influence: a fact, if it is one, that should not lead to dancing in the streets, since the results could be quite as disturbing as they are momentarily pleasing. Still another reason may be that the intellectuals occupy a more important place in American politics than they did thirty or forty years ago; they shape opinion in the universities; and the universities, in turn, serve as the training school for the American political elite. From a persistent and thoughtful criticism in the universities there may follow a crisis in morale among sections of this political elite, especially if the country stumbles deeper and deeper into the Vietnam disaster while preparing for itself still greater disasters in Latin America tomorrow.

But let us not delude ourselves. On the issue of foreign policy even

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these modest hopes for a progressive coalition may be dashed, and on this issue the new academic dissidence may be driven—or may drive itself—into a hopeless isolation. In principle there is no reason why those who oppose the Vietnam war and at least some of those who support it should not be able to cooperate for desirable legislation and action in domestic politics. Between opponents of the war and *some* of its supporters there exists a common interest in not allowing the war to become a pretext for cutting back or refusing to initiate necessary domestic measures. Yet if the war in Vietnam drags on for months and years, with one probable consequence a growing embitterment in political and intellectual life at home, radicals will find it difficult to maintain a balance between coalition on the domestic front and criticism of foreign policy. For in the actuality of experience it is hard to keep clear the distinctions that seem persuasive in the logic of discourse. Whatever hope there is for a new political upsurge in the United States —and by this I mean something more substantial than the outbursts of student rebellion—largely depends on a quick solution to the problem of Vietnam. That is hardly the main reason for wanting to see the war end, but it is a reason.

Otherwise, the consequences could be disastrous, both for the political life of the entire nation, perhaps again infected with a low-charged version of the McCarthyite sickness, and for the still very weak and insecure radicalism that has begun to appear on the campus. There is already a tendency among academic protestors to fall back upon postures of rectitude instead of trying to engage in the far more difficult business of influencing the shape of politics, just as there is a destructive and at times nihilistic fringe in the essentially healthy student protests. But if the war in Vietnam continues, there may in conscience be nothing left for its critics except postures of rectitude and declarations of conscience—partly because of a tightening in the political atmosphere, partly because of righteous misdirection in the protest movement itself. What would then happen? Locked into isolation, academic protest would risk the danger of becoming merely shrill, righteously impotent and foolishly "anti-American"; some would be tempted—disastrously, I think —to see themselves as shock troops of the campus waging a battle of advertisements against U.S. imperialism in a way parallel to the war of bullets waged by Castroite guerrillas in Latin America. And one consequence of such a development could well be a wave of anti-intellectualism in this country, a new attack upon the academy as the reservoir (*the last reservoir*) of sedition. It is a frightful prospect.

There is nevertheless, a growing sentiment of moralistic radicalism, attached to visions of apocalypse and the theory of mass society, which

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accepts this prospect as virtually inevitable. Among sections of the student Left there also flourish feelings that call into question the viability of politics in the various senses that have been traditional to the Western world. If, as these academic radicals increasingly feel, the major social classes and institutions have, through comfort or corruption, become utterly absorbed into the existing society, then there seems to be no significant social force that can be expected to work toward major change. There follows a desperate search for a "substitute proletariat," located by some among the hipsters, by others among the middle-class students, by still others among the underclass of poverty. And the consequence can only be a strategy of raids, dramatic in character but dubious in impact.

Mass Society, Technology and the Specter of Contentment

The sentiments and feelings to which I have just referred are attached to a political outlook of great importance; its most distinguished spokesman is probably Herbert Marcuse. This theory seems so opposed in tone and spirit to everything I have been saying that if I now suggest that both perspectives—the politics of democratic radicalism I have outlined and the vision of "mass society" I shall now describe—need to be kept in some sort of uneasy and uneven balance, I may open myself to the charge of intellectual schizophrenia. I cheerfully (or, given the subject, gloomily) accept the risk. For there are sharply opposing tendencies and potentialities in Western society; we cannot yet know which will prevail. To say that for a grasp of American society one must simultaneously employ the traditional Marxist analysis of class conflict, the approach I will label "mass society," and a study of competing power groups within a more or less balanced pluralist system—to say this is not necessarily to lapse into an easy eclecticism. It is rather to acknowledge the mixed character of the present reality, and that the various theories, none complete or satisfactory by itself, point to different elements within that reality.

The school of political-social thought associated with the idea of "mass society" singles out the potential in modern industrialism for a drift toward a bureaucratic, non-terrorist and prosperous authoritarianism. Whatever our wish to qualify this kind of theorizing, and whatever our impatience with the grisly fascination some of its proponents seem to take in envisioning a universal passivity, there can be no question that it points to significant realities. Such theories rest upon a number of related assumptions:

- *The alleged automatism of technology.* Jacques Ellul writes as an extreme reductionist:

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> . . . Because of its proliferation, the technical phenomenon has assumed an independent character quite apart from economic considerations, and . . . it develops according to its own intrinsic laws. Technique has become man's new milieu, replacing his former natural milieu. And just as man's natural environment obeys its own physical, chemical and other laws, our artificial, technical environment is now so constituted that it has also its own laws of organization, development and reproduction. . . . . . . This view of technique leads me to think that modifications in economic structure, a *detente* in international relations, and improved cooperation among nations will cause practically no change in the technical phenomenon.

And on a somewhat wider plane, Herbert Marcuse writes:

> The world tends to become the stuff of total administration, which absorbs even the administrators themselves.

• *The decay of the Western party system.* Though touched upon in many studies, this theme has, to my knowledge, not yet received a definitive statement. It is clear that in most of the Western countries the party system has been steadily drained of content. It survives, in some places, as mere ritual or anachronism, and sometimes as a mechanism for the efficient division of power and spoils among an elite; it no longer reflects, certainly not to the extent that it once did, basic differences of class interest, political allegiance or moral value. Even in those countries where the apparatus of representative democracy survives, it tends to become vestigial, confined to a minority of professionals and of decreasing interest to the mass of citizens. Yet for democrats this party system, even in decline, remains precious, a concrete embodiment of freedoms for which, thus far, no substitute nearly as satisfactory has been found.

• *The satisfaction of material wants tends to undercut the possibility for social transcendence.* Herbert Marcuse writes:

> Technical progress, extended to a whole system of domination and coordination, creates forms of life (and of power) which appear to reconcile the forces opposing the system and to defeat or refute all protest in the name of the historical prospects of freedom from toil and domination.

• *There develops, partly in consequence of the above-listed elements, a new kind of society, what we call "mass society."* It is a relatively comfortable, half-welfare and half-garrison society in which the population grows passive, indifferent and atomized; in which "primary groups" tend to disintegrate; in which traditional loyalties, ties and associations become lax or dissolve entirely; in which coherent

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publics based on definite interests and opinions gradually fall apart; and in which man becomes a consumer, himself mass-produced like the products, diversions and values he absorbs.

When one is involved in concrete political analysis that involves firm and immediate choices, it seems to me both intellectually facile and morally disastrous to affirm an identity between the societies of East and West. Though there is a tendency for the two to move closer together in certain ways, the differences remain enormous and crucial. But if one turns from the immediate political struggle to a kind of speculation about the indefinite future, there may be some reason for anticipating a society ruled by benevolent and modernized Grand Inquisitors, an efficient political-technical elite that will avoid terror and the grosser aspects of totalitarianism, that will perhaps even go through the motions of democracy but in its essential character be thoroughly authoritarian. It would be a society in regard to which Huxley's prophecy would seem more accurate than Orwell's.

If there will not be a war within the next period and a way is found for controlling the birth rate, it becomes possible to envisage a world, at least the part of it that has been industrialized, in which material wants will be moderately satisfied. This possibility arises, not, as radicals once thought, because there is an immediate likelihood that the race will create for itself a free and humane order, but largely because of the sheer cascading growth of technology.

To advance such a speculation at a time when the majority of human beings on our planet still suffer from terrible poverty may seem irrelevant and heartless. It is a speculation which rests on grossly simplified ideas, partly on a technological determinism that cannot be accepted by a sophisticated mind. But I offer it *not* as a prediction, only as a possibility. That this possibility will not be realized in the next several decades seems certain. But it remains worth considering in its own right.

Suppose, then, that the goal of moderate material satisfaction is reached after the next several decades in large areas of the world and in societies that are not socialist and often not democratic. What would the intellectuals say? We may assume that large numbers of ordinary people, fed regularly and diverted by the mass media, would be satisfied. But the intellectuals? Would they still remember or care about the vision of human freedom?

In our time the Grand Inquisitor is no longer a withered Churchman: stern, ascetic, undeluded. He is now a skilled executive who knows how to manage large-scale enterprises and sustain the morale of his employees. In the West he is a corporation official, in the East

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he is on the Central Committee. He is friendly. And he feeds the hungry.

What, then, can one say about this mode of speculation?

• Its main value is as a corrective to the ameliorative optimism (the twentieth-century version of the supposedly discredited nineteenth-century theory of "progress") held by conventional liberals. By this I mean not merely something as obvious yet basic as the fact that our welfarism is deeply tied in with a steadily burgeoning militarism and would face a severe crisis if the prop of "defense spending" were removed. I mean also the fact that a serious radical politics must seek not merely for the extension of welfarism but for controls to check the accompanying bureaucratic expansion; must concern itself not merely with what happens to or is done for people, but with their capacities toward self-assertion and autonomy.

• That there have been in recent years outbursts of political activity on the campus and in the civil rights movement does not in itself invalidate the "mass society" prognosis. The Negro demands are, after all, largely concerned with the kinds of issues that could and should have been settled before "mass society" was imagined. The student rebelliousness may be no more than the futile effort of a small minority to diverge from a dominant pattern. We do not yet know.

• The central difficulty with the "mass society" style of thought is that, pushed hard enough, it posits a virtual end or blockage of history. Now much modernist literature, as Georg Lukács has shrewdly noted, does exactly the same thing: it abandons the idea of historicity, falls back upon notions of a universal *condition humaine* or a rhythm of eternal recurrence, even as it is committed within its own realm to change, turmoil, ceaseless re-creation. Powerful as this vision is in the modernist novel, it will not suffice for political analysis. In studying the novel we must explain the vision of a historical blockage in essentially historical terms, and thus posit, at some point, an end to modernism. In social life itself, however, all experience points to the certainty of change. We should profit here from the fate of Hannah Arendt's brilliant theory of totalitarianism: it lacked a sense of the dynamic that might lead to disintegration from within or transformation from without. And what the experience of the postwar years strongly impresses upon one is that even institutions seemingly invulnerable crack under the pressure of internal conflict (*including conflicts we cannot foresee*) and thereby call into question the nightmare vision of stasis.

• One of the things that today distinguishes a radical from a liberal is not merely that the radical holds to a vision of social transformation going beyond the limits of the welfare state while the liberal acts within those limits; it is also that the radical sees the possibility that from, or

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with, the evolution of the welfare state there may arise the kind of appalling "double" signified by the idea of the "mass society," while the liberal is not as a rule disturbed by speculations of this kind. The radical is both more optimistic and more pessimistic. Yet he has no choice but to act as if the mass society can indeed be averted; otherwise, he may doom himself to a self-confirming prophecy. And meanwhile there is surely enough evidence of continued social conflict and change to warrant the assumption that history will continue, that we have by no means reached the end of major social transformations and that the impulse to a secular transcendence remains a living force.

The Problem of Socialism, Again

About this complex and entangled subject I want to say only one thing: the one thing that indicates the central difficulty of a radical criticism that would go beyond "the given."

Does a great historical movement ever get a second chance? Suppose Saul of Tarsus and the rest of the original "cadre" had been destroyed, or had committed some incredible blunder: could Christianity have regained its momentum after an interval of isolation and despair? For socialism, it is clear, the great historical opportunity came in the first quarter of this century, and for a variety of reasons—the Social Democrats and Leninists were keen enough in their criticism of each other—the chance was not taken.

Historical mission and idealism cannot be whipped up at demand; once a generation becomes exhausted or an idea contaminated, it takes a long time before new efforts can be made, if they can be made at all. Meanwhile history does not stand still. Socialism having failed to transform Western society in the first quarter of the century, part of what it had supposed to be its "historical missions" was now appropriated by the existing society. Where that did not happen, as in the backward countries, there arose a corrupt mockery of socialism, a total state (I quote Proudhon's uncanny anticipation)

> having the appearance of being founded on the dictatorship of the masses, but in which the masses have no more power than is necessary to ensure a general serfdom in accordance with the precepts and principles borrowed from the old absolutism; indivisibility of public power, all-consuming centralization, systematic destruction of all individual, corporative and regional thought, and inquisitorial police.

Whether socialism as a movement—I leave aside the European Social Democracy, which has mostly a formal relation to the idea of socialism—can be revived, or whether it will have served historically

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as a bridge toward some new radical humanism, I do not know.

Socialists remain: a few. They are people devoted to a problem, or a memory that gives rise to a problem. The socialist idea signifies, first, a commitment to the values of fraternity, libertarianism, egalitarianism and freedom. It means, secondly, commitment to an envisioned society in which a decisive proportion of the means of production shall be commonly owned and democratically controlled. What, however, is the relation between these two commitments?

One great failing of the socialist movement in the past was that it did not recognize, or recognize sufficiently, the inherent tension between the values it claimed to embody and the social scheme it proposed to enact. Traditionally, it was assumed that a particular change in property forms and relations would be adequate to, or at least largely prepare for, the desired change in the quality of life. (At its most Bourbon-like level, this meant the notion that mere state ownership or nationalization of the means of production would be a sufficient criterion for bestowing the label "workers state.") Now we know from sad experience that the transformation of economy from private to public ownership is not necessarily "progressive," and such transformations seem, in any case, to be part of a general worldwide drift.

The dominant stress of the Marxist movements has been upon political means (strategy, tactics, propaganda) concerning which it often had sophisticated theories; but in regard to the society it envisaged, the content of its hope, it had surprisingly little to say, sometimes no more than the threadbare claim that once "we" take power, "we" will work things out. Martin Buber is right in saying:

> To the questions of the elements of social re-structure, Marx and Engels never gave a positive answer, because they had no inner relation to this idea. . . . The political act remained the one thing worth striving for. . . .

By now the more reflective socialists feel differently, but as often happens in human affairs, a growth in awareness does not necessarily facilitate confidence in action. If today we are asked what we mean or envision by socialism, our first instinctive response—even if it never reaches our lips—is likely to be in negative terms: "we don't mean such and such . . . we don't mean simply nationalization of industry. . . ." Our first response, that is, rests upon a deviation from a previously-held norm, and thereby constitutes a kind of self-criticism. (That listeners may not even know the tradition from which we are deviating is one of the perils of the passage of time and American ahistoricism.)

We now try to describe our vision of the good society in terms of

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qualities, sentiments of freedom and fraternity, norms of conduct and value, priorities of social allocation; whereas, by and large, the tradition of socialism has been to speak in terms of changing institutions and power relationships. Yet in undertaking this shift of emphasis we cannot but admit the cogency of a certain kind of criticism: "A society, even one envisaged in the future, cannot be described simply by specifying desired qualities. You may hope to infuse a future society with those qualities; you may expect that a new social structure will promote or encourage those qualities. But a society must also, perhaps even primarily, be described or foreseen in structural terms."

For most of the European Social Democratic parties, this problem barely exists, since they have decided, usually in practice and sometimes in program, to abandon the idea of socialization of the economy. In doing so, they become little more than liberal welfarist parties. Arguing against Anthony Crossland's theoretical defense of such a course, George Lichtheim properly remarks:

> . . . The Conservative party could in principle accept all his reform demands and still retain control of the country. What would really undermine its hold—a major shift in the ownership of property—is precisely the thing he regards as unnecessary. The residual demand for it is, he thinks, a vestige of Marxism. In that case the Tories must be regarded as full-blooded Marxists, for the one thing they seem determined to prevent is a drastic change in the social balance which would transfer the power of decision-making from private firms to public authorities.

If, then, we do retain the perspective of a long-range socializations of economy, the problem becomes how to reconcile the traditional socialist emphasis upon property forms—an emphasis necessary but not sufficient—with a more sophisticated understanding of the relationship between social structure and humane values. In any case, we neither can nor should wish to recapture the innocence of traditional socialism. We may try to develop schemes for autonomous and pluralistic social institutions within a collectivist economy. We may wish to place a decisive stress upon the idea of democratic participation. We may argue that the trend toward economic collectivism is historically unavoidable and the only choice facing men is whether it should be allowed to drift into bureaucratic authoritarianism or brought under the sponsorship of a democratic policy. But in the end we know that "history" guarantees us nothing: everything is now a question of human will.

Perhaps another way of saying all this is to insist that the vision of utopia remains a genuine option, a profound need. (Could one imagine

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the survival of the intellectuals as a distinct group if that vision were extinguished?) It is the sense of a possible good society that provides a guiding norm for our day-to-day political life. Without such an assumption, radical criticism runs the danger of declining into mere complaint or veering into elitist manipulation. Perhaps, then, the accumulation of defeats suffered by socialism can yet provide a premise for new beginnings.

Finally, The Intellectuals

It is tempting to end with a call for greater political involvement. But what, in the present circumstances, would that mean? The American intellectual world, except in regard to an occasional issue or figure arousing strong emotions, is not greatly interested in politics. Things have, to be sure, improved a little since the fifties: one encounters less frequently the smugness of literary people who regard politics as a sign of vulgarity. But the idea of a sustained political involvement seems abstract or unlikely to most American intellectuals. Some of the reasons for this are not at all admirable: narcissism, lucrative busy-work, exhibitionism, competitiveness, all related to an affluent but insecure culture. Other reasons deserve to be taken seriously: a genuine doubt as to what intellectuals can achieve, uncertainty as to how to act. That there is no party or movement to which radical intellectuals can attach themselves does not bother me as much as certain intellectuals claim it bothers them. I am more concerned with the development of a serious political consciousness within the arena in which intellectuals live and work. Concerning which, three concluding remarks:

- The American university has recently become more alive, more concerned politically, than it had been for several decades. This, on the whole, is a cheering development, but some aspects are also disturbing. There are available on the American campus—which, as it grows at an astonishing rate, becomes one of the major centers of national life—far more spokesmen for a democratic radicalism than are now making themselves heard. To the extent that they fail to speak out and establish relations with the aroused students, to that extent will the rising campus rebelliousness be diverted and entangled. Silence, abstention, indifference may not have mattered very much in university life these past few decades; now they matter enormously. To carry the moods of the fifties into the sixties will have bitter consequences.
- A major shift or shakeup of "power relations" seems in prospect for the intellectual world. For the first time in several decades, the generation of intellectuals associated with the thirties—a generation bound together by common problems, experiences and quarrels—seems

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in danger of losing its dominant position in American intellectual life. That it has kept that position for so long and through such a bewildering series of political-intellectual changes is itself extraordinary. But now there is beginning to appear in the graduate schools, and near the student and civil rights movements a younger generation of intellectuals and semi-intellectuals, perhaps not as well-equipped dialectically as the older leftists, semi-leftists and ex-leftists, and certainly not as wide-ranging in interest or accomplished in style, yet endowed with a self-assurance, a lust for power, a contempt for and readiness to swallow up their elders which is at once amusing, admirable and disturbing. Thinking of themselves as "new radicals," these young people see as one of their major tasks the dislodgment of the old ones; and they are not inclined to make precise distinctions as to differences of opinion among the old ones. It seems clear to them that a good many radicals of the thirties have grown tired, or dropped out, or in some instances, sold out. They encounter teachers who, on ceremonial occasions, like to proclaim old socialist affiliations, but who really have little or no sympathy with the rebelliousness of today. They are very shrewd at sensing how a profuse nostalgia for radical youth can serve to cloak acquiescence in the status quo. They are also very quick on the draw in dismissing those with whom they disagree as "middle class" or "establishment" or "fink." A *Kulturkampf* seems in prospect, and one in which, I must confess, my own sympathies would be mixed.

• For radical intellectuals one theme should stand out above all others: the articulation of democratic values. In the American academy today, as in our intellectual life, there is a considerable fallout of authoritarianism, that major blight of the twentieth century. (A significant study could be undertaken of the way American political scientists and sociologists, in their recent passion for hardheaded "realism," have provided rationales for authoritarian societies and outlooks.) It is a blight spread across the entire political spectrum: conservative, liberal, radical. It fits the age only too well. It rides the wave of the future—perhaps. To speak out in behalf of the ideal of democracy; to resist all rationalizations for authoritarian rulers and movements; to proclaim our pleasure in the appearance of the "revisionist" intellectuals in eastern Europe who also insist that without freedom there can be no good society, no life worth living: that would be a task which could again make the calling of intellectual a reason for pride.

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NOTES

(*Continued from Page* 174)

teaches in the Department of Philosophy and in the Law School at Chicago. . . . **STEPHEN DONADIO** has an M.A. from Columbia. . . . **LEWIS A. COSER** is working on a book on political sociology and on a study of American intellectuals. . . . **JOHN GROSS** is a freelance writer living in London. . . . **VICTOR BROMBERT's** new book on Flaubert will be out this fall. . . . **STEPHEN KOCH** is a young writer living in New York. . . . Random House put out **ROBERT LANGBAUM's** book on Isak Dinesen, **The Gayety of Vision,** last year. . . . **ROBERT GARIS** teaches English at Wellesley. . . . **WALLACE KATZ** is finishing his Ph.D. in history at Columbia.

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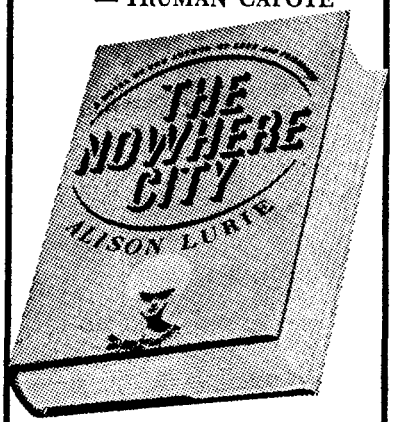

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1. Date of filing is October 1, 1965.

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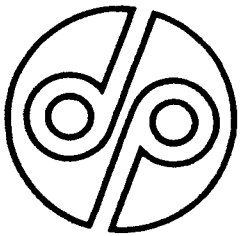

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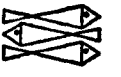

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